

"The Young Idea"  
or  
Common School Culture

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# "THE YOUNG IDEA"

OR

COMMON SCHOOL CULTURE

BY

CAROLINE B. LEROW

COMPILER OF "ENGLISH AS SHE IS TAUGHT."

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"Truth is afraid of nothing but concealment."—*Plato*.

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DEDICATED  
TO THE  
FATHERS AND MOTHERS OF AMERICA  
BY ONE WHO  
LOVES THEIR CHILDREN.

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## PREFACE.

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THE reader will please take it patiently if he find what has already been printed again printed here. Printing ink now is like sympathetic ink, it becomes as quickly invisible as visible; wherefore it is good to repeat old thoughts in the newest books. Why should one single good observation or rule be lost because it is imprisoned in some monstrous folio or blown away in some single sheet?—[Preface to "Levana; or, The Doctrine of Education."—JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.





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# “THE YOUNG IDEA”

OR

COMMON SCHOOL CULTURE.

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## CHAPTER I.

“SOMETHING YOU FIND OUT.”

THE definition of the word “wicked,” occurring in the reading lesson, is asked in a class of children from ten to twelve years of age, of foreign parentage, and living in a tenement-house ward.

“What does ‘wicked’ mean? Some one tell.”

“A sick person.”

“Oh, no. Wicked means very naughty, very bad. Tell me what wicked persons do.”

“Thieves, robbers, murders, niggers, ghosts—”

“O my dear children! There is no such thing as a ghost, and negroes are not all wicked.”

“I know a nigger that steals. Our dog steals. Rats steals.”

“Is it wicked for a dog or a rat to steal?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Why not?”

“‘Cause they ain’t got no manners.”

The public school teacher who gives this *ver-*

her report of the lesson is unreasonable enough to follow it with a complaint that her "grade" requires her to teach a few other simple, familiar words, indispensable to the immediate use of the children. Among these are "columbine, geranium, gorgeous, chorister, canopy, surplice, reverence, assembled, languidly," etc., etc. What suggestive words to these favored tenement-house waifs and strays, surrounded as they are by all the varied beauties of nature and of art? Think of the wide expanse over which their eyes are privileged to roam,—what stretches of dirty, sagging roofs, piled with the choicest rubbish; crooked and blackened chimneys sharply cut against the brilliant blue of the hidden heavens; graceful pulley clothes-lines displaying their fluttering treasures! What unlimited visions of ash boxes and barrels, rags and garbage! What can they not tell their delighted teacher about "columbines and geraniums, choristers and surplices!" What visions of old cathedrals, flooded with "dim, religious light"; of the canopied altar; of the assembled congregation bowing in reverence,—languidly or otherwise,—are instantly and vividly brought to these young minds by the mere casual mention of these euphonious syllables!

Some equally unreasonable teachers are prone to quote the words of Comenius, who flattered himself that he understood something of the philosophy of education,—*"We must learn*



things before words." But of what use are books and dictionaries and teachers, unless the books are to hold the words, and the dictionaries are to hold the definitions, and the child is to hold both words and definitions until the time comes for the recitation which delivers them over to the teacher?

Another lesson requires the definition of "monopoly." Monopoly! Simple word enough. How terribly familiar we are with it! How it is repeated and explained and discussed by the press and the public of this country, blessed with commercial "corners," great telegraph combinations, and gigantic railroad corporations. Monopoly! Why, every man among us knows what that is, and if any child in the fourth grade doesn't know, it's high time he did.

The dictionary is at hand.

"Monopoly—from two Greek words meaning *alone* and *to sell*. Sole permission and power of dealing in any goods or with a particular country; exclusive command or possession."

That night the teacher in her hall bed-room, "correcting exercises" by the light of her kerosene lamp, reads with inexpressible satisfaction that

"Our grocery man is a monopoly because he keeps on a corner all alone."

From the next paper she learns that, contrary to the notion of some political economists, monopoly has an utilitarian element, since

"Monopoly is something to clean the floor with."

The dictionary has enlightened the children on the meaning of "Stability, the state of being firm or stable." To these narrow-minded young people this is, to be sure, a little like walking around in a circle, leading one of them to announce that

"Stability is taking care of a stable," while another one declares, "Stability is stables in general."

There is something tantalizing in this last expression,—*"in general."* Now what had the child in his mind when he wrote those non-committal words which may mean so much or so little? *"Stables—in general."* Alas, the kerosene lamp sheds no light on the mystery.

A very common and useful word is *"albino."* In this enlightened age, what sort of education is that which neglects to instruct children concerning the nature and characteristics of an albino? The teacher is faithful to the requirements of the *"grade,"* and her midnight labor rewards her with the discovery that

"An albino has no eyes."

"An albino has red eyes and hair."

*elali*  
"A mosquito is the child of black and white parents."

One might almost be tempted to believe that there is some truth in the assertion of Tennyson, "Things seen are mightier than things

heard." Can it be that old Comenius was not, after all, so very far astray?

"Boys in school," says *Education*, "shine chiefly by the knowledge of words, for this is the mere work of memory; but in practical life men are useful and successful in proportion to their knowledge of things."

Yet there are some boys in school who do not shine very brilliantly even in their knowledge of words, judging from their interpretation of some very easy ones.

"Repugnant" is a good word, and not too common. It has a sort of rude and impressive strength about it. It has been duly explained and illustrated as the "grade" requires. But several days have elapsed since the learning of the definition, during which other imposing words,—*"obelisk, doxology, evangelist, ironical, tocsin, epoch, monastery,"* and similar every-day terms with which every intelligent child ought to be familiar,—have also been defined and illustrated. Next in order, as harvest follows seed-sowing, comes the natural and legitimate examination as a test of the pupils' ability to "go up higher." Teachers can do much; they have been known to work miracles, but even they can not "gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles" as is proved by the quality of the intellectual fruit raised for inspection in the educational market.

"Repugnant, one who repugs."

"Obelisk, one of the marks of punctuation."

"Doxology, dropsy in the head."

"Evangelist, one who speaks from his stomach."

"Ironical, something very hard."

"Tocsin, something to do with getting drunk."

"Epoch, a ruler or son of a king," and,—  
can it be possible that it is a conscious and intentional witticism?—

"Monastery, a place for monsters."

The statement, "A termagant is a kind of goose," no one will be foolish enough to challenge, especially the victims of the termagant, and there is an indisputable truth in the assertion.

"A phenix is one who sifts ashes," if we accept it as a description of the manner in which the creature is supposed to extricate itself from its own *débris*.

"A sling is something made from an old shoe," is evidently an original declaration, and not borrowed from books, but there is a suspicious flavor about "Teutonic, a very strong sort of spring medicine."

Truly, as another pupil explains,

"A definition is something you find out."

Sometimes it would seem to be something you can't find out.

"He shall be as a god to me who shall rightly divide and define," says Plato; therefore, as gods are desirable in this commonplace world of

ours, let our schools be set to work to manufacture them as speedily as possible.

"But is not education the process by which the child grows wiser day by day? Shall he study only the words with which he is already familiar?"

Shall the little toddler, holding to the chair to balance himself, be taught to walk by setting him to march with a regiment through the main avenue of the city? Shall he be instructed how to conduct himself at the table by being required to carve the turkey for the entire company?

In the Introduction to his admirable "Thesaurus of English Words," Roget states, "The investigation of the distinctions to be drawn between words apparently synonymous I have not presumed to enter upon. Its complete exhaustion would require the devotion of a whole life." Oh, well, if that is the case, why is it not perfectly reasonable to ask the little ones, the babies in linguistic science, to write out for us the subtle distinctions which they so readily perceive between—for instance—prediction, prognostication, augury, and prophecy? They need not be at all disturbed by any shades of meaning in disturbance, perturbation, rotation, and oscillation; bewildered by mystification, sophistry, equivocation, or miscalculation, or perplexed by declension, enervation, dereliction, or renunciation. "Words," says Oliver Wendell Holmes, "are solemn things." No doubt they often



prove so to the little children, awed by the sounding syllables.

"It's a poor rule that won't work both ways," we are often told, so if this one is a good one,—  
"The wider the intelligence, the simpler the expressions in which its knowledge is embodied," the converse must hold true,—  
"The narrower the intelligence, the more elaborate the expressions in which its—lack of—knowledge should be embodied."

Prof. Alexander Bain has a word to say on synonyms : "Our only course is to let words be known with such significance as the pupil can readily imbibe, leaving their more delicate shades to be gathered by subsequent experience. Truth, verity, veracity, consistency, have a common meaning, with differences that prevent their indiscriminate application. To point out these differences is to give a lesson in the subject and not in the expression. Such lessons are not to be entered upon at random."

But it not unfrequently happens that fools invade without hesitation the territory which angels would never presume to enter. "Yea, verily, they have their reward" in such spoils as

"The little bird sings with great violence."

"I eat my pie with a little impetuosity."

"The ebullition is when the tide goes way out to see."

And, as if these were not enough,

"Savage, when a man rides wild horses."

"Headstrong is to drink too much whiskey."

"Frantic is something up in the garret."

"Language and thought are inseparable," says Max Muller. "Words without thoughts are dead sounds; thoughts without words are nothing. The word is the thought incarnate," as, for instance,

"A proturberance is an effervescence."

"Ethereal is something relating to the lower regions."

"A sonambulist is a man that talks when you dont know where he is."

We may sometimes find ourselves taken un-  
awares by such information as

"A pully is a sort of chickin."

"A raffle is a kind of gun."

"Ventilation is letting in contaminated air."

"Mastification is moving the jaws all round."

"Alkalie is acids mixed up."

"A rehearsal is what they have at a funeral."

"Gladiators grow in my mas garden."

"An incendiary is when you go round preach-  
ing and singing him."

"Expostulation is to have the small-pox,"  
and

"A turbot is a kind of rhetorical style." But  
"accidents will happen in the best regulated  
families," and, occasionally, things may get a  
little mixed if there are a great many of them,  
and the apartments of the mental habitation are  
neither numerous nor spacious.

We learn further, as the result of our reasonable expectations, that

"Lemons are austere because they are sour," and also that

"My mother makes flabjacks of austere milk," perhaps the same parent of whom it is written,

"My mothers spoons is contemplative, because they aint reel silver."

Says Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, "Let us not be very much astonished if the stream of words which is given to the youth in order that he may thereby guide and bear himself upon the ocean, should be dissipated by the winds and waves on every side."

Why can not we content ourselves with the kernel of truth contained in the next definition, when we consider the Latin *cursorius*?

"The boy was cursory when he ran to catch the train."

There is a homely and original flavor about the domestic revelation,

"My sister sets the table for supper very cursory, because she is very quick," and we are sorry the pupil has any acquaintance of whom he can say

"That man was very cursury, because he swore a great deal."

But if a "profane swearer" is not a cursory man, what is he? As the boy said of a disputed word in his lesson, "If r-o-x doesn't spell rocks, I'd like to know what it does spell."

"I am hungry and must have an edible," declares another. Granted that he tells the truth about his physical condition—and it would be idiotic to doubt it at his age of unlimited capacity—he should certainly be given something edible before he is taught the difference between a noun and an adjective.

"One word may mollify another," he tells us with a sweet unconsciousness of how he has blundered upon a fact, for one wiser than he has told us that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

"A policeman wears a lawsuit," may not be strictly true if one is obliged to adhere as strictly to the letter of the law, and it is doubtful if

"David charmed Saul with a harpoon."

Probably quite a contrary effect would have been produced by the use, no matter how skillful, of that particular weapon. It does occasionally seem as if

"A problem is something you cant ever find out."

How the soul of Lord Byron would have rejoiced in the definition

"A critic is something to put your feet on to."

By an evident association of ideas, two quite dissimilar words seem somehow to be "all in the family":

"Treaty is when your mother gives you

money to buy fire-crackers and ice cream forth of July."

"Cerebration is having a good time forth of July."

Bless the little appreciative soul !

"Missionary when a man goes to the hethen and they eat him all up," is suggestive in that little word "all" of no halfway work, whatever may be thought of the moral or physical tendency of the work itself. But it becomes a little difficult to "draw the line" between the day school and the Sunday-school instruction, when we are told

"Cannibal is two brothers that killed themselves in the Bible."

"Our parlor is a bivalve because it has folding doors," is an architectural technicality betraying its Latin origin, and for which the book, not the occupant of the parlor, should be held responsible.

"Indian rubber is very sarcastic," comes within less than an inch of the truth, and if

"Indian cabooses ride on their mothers backs," perhaps it is more the mothers' business than it is ours.

After reading that

"She was called a patrician because she lived in Paris," that

"A plebiscite is a very small insecck," that

"A constellation of physicians had been summoned," and that



"The dog ensued the man to the brook," we do not wonder that

"The boy was sick with information," though if he were asked questions about things which are to him real things, would he tell you that a pair of skates was something to eat, a bob-sled something to wear, or a piece of pie something to play with? But he defines "mortal" as "everlasting" as he has no possible way of discriminating between mortality and immortality; "malediction," which he calls a "blessing," has no distinction in his mind from "benediction," and why should it have—save by the accident of memory? If to him "Remuneration is cutting off from church membership," what wonder, when he is practically talking in an unknown tongue?

"So far as the different counties have been heard from,"—as say the newspapers the morning after election,—no child has yet been required to explain color to a blind man, sound to a deaf man, or heat to an Esquimau.

This early and persistent use of words without ideas is the worm at the root of the educational tree, and its blighting effect can be traced through every branch of the child's mental labor. He is from the first in a state of bondage to words; he learns to depend wholly upon words; he conceives a ludicrous deference for words. In the language of Bildad the Shuhite, "How long will it be ere ye make an end of Words?"

## CHAPTER II.

"WORDS, WORDS, WORDS."

"SHLIGIOUSMORE?"

"What?"

"Shligiousmorlis?"

"*What?*"

"Shligiousmorlisamples?" and the mystified merchant finally succeeds in guessing that his new sixteen-year-old clerk, just graduated from a high school, is trying to ask the simple question, "Shall I give you some more of the lists of samples?"

Reading stands first among the traditional trinity of R's, and in most schools an hour a day is allowed for it. With five lessons a week during the school terms, the child of twelve has received over one thousand hours of instruction in this one branch alone. Does it follow that the average sixteen-year-old boy or girl can take up to-day's newspaper and read it aloud comfortably for himself and pleasantly for other people? As we listen, both ears and ideas become equally confused. Nothing less than our eyes can assure us that the "Coronet of Pine" at which we wonder is simple "Carbonate of Lime," and that "Fleshy Tin Simpletons" are "Pleasures in Little Things." We solidify "Falling Showers Rapidly Shining"

into a "Porcelain Tower, Nankin, China," and question whether the "Rolls of Carpet" made out of the "Ruins of Carthage," prove the indestructibility of matter. We yearn for some of the spirit which moved the little Southern pickaninny who, reporting the fact that some one had asked her who she was, declared, "I spoke up loud and kinder bright, and said, 'I'se Twins!'"

Is it not barely possible that some of this mumbling, stumbling, distressing, and distracting utterance may be caused by some sin of omission or of commission in teaching a child to read? Such a suspicion may occasionally force itself upon the thoughtful mind.

A knowledge of vowels and consonants may not be essential to man's mortal body or immortal soul, but the simplest rudiments of a common-school education always include this distinction between the letters of the alphabet.

Nothing can be more truthful than the first page of a certain text-book :

"What is a letter ?

"A letter is a character used to represent the sound of the human voice.

"What is a vowel ?

"A vowel is a letter that represents a complete sound.

"What is a consonant ?

"A consonant is a letter which does not represent a complete sound.

"What is a syllable?"

"A syllable is one or more letters combined so as to form a distinct sound. It is so much of a word as can be uttered with one impulse of the voice." Etc., etc., etc.

Yet after this admirable drill, the child states with a touching confidence that

"The vowels are five, a e i o u and sometimes w and y, and is a sort of liver complaint."

If the first requisite in all speech is ability to utter the sounds of which words are composed, we may as well be introduced as speedily as possible to Vowel, Consonant, Diphthong & Co. But what meaning is conveyed to the average child by the printed statement of a "complete sound" or "an impulse of the voice"? Not much apparently, judging from the assertion that

"Complete is the kind of a sound a little sheap makes," and that

"An impulse is what the doctor takes ahold of to feel if you are sick."

Sometimes a little Latin light is turned on to these definitions, and children see that "vowel" means "vocal," and "consonant" "sounding with." The result of this classical illumination is the declaration that

"A consonant is something you cant here unless you mak it make a noise with something else."

This definition, while undoubtedly true, fails somehow to carry with it a conviction that the child has as clear and satisfactory a notion of the article as might be desirable. As for a diphthong, though it is called "a very contagious disease," there does not appear to be any immediate danger of the child's taking it.

Children are occasionally instructed in the "breve," "macron," and "diæresis," becoming perfect pen-and-ink artists in the execution of "diacritical marks." But that ability does not necessarily imply any comprehension of the polysyllabic adjective, or of the management of the muscles in making the sounds.

Is there "any firm reason to be rendered" why children should be kept for years calling over the names of the letters of which words are composed, when all speech and reading consists simply of the sounds of those letters?

Poetry is read and studied for years in the schoolroom, yet what realization have the pupils of the effect of these same vowels and consonants upon the smoothness, melody, and power of the verse? "I cannot over-rate for practical purposes the importance of a study of phonetics which gives insight into the nature of connected speech," says Francis B. Gummere in an admirable article on "Poetry in the Schoolroom."

Prof. Gummere's use of the words "practical purposes" is worth considering, for to a large class, nothing in the educational line seems of



any consequence unless it can be proved to be "practical," believing as they do with Mr. Gradgrind that "in this life we want nothing but facts, sir; nothing but facts."

Proper drill in phonetics, or the physiology of vowels and consonants, is practical because it combines in the highest degree vocal and physical exercise, thereby having a permanently beneficial effect upon the health of the child. Good health has always a definite money value in a community.

In the lines of work recently developed by stenography and type-writing, a large number of men and women are finding the bread for which they must labor as well as pray. The immortal, much-studied, and misunderstood vowels and consonants form the basis upon which rests the science of short-hand writing; while distinct utterance is the only thing that can render profitable any dictation for type-writing. Perhaps it is unreasonable for the graduates of our schools and colleges to complain that after the vast amount of instruction they have received in reading, they must return to a second childhood and learn the real meaning of their familiar alphabet before they can learn the first principles of phonography.

"Reading is an art in which all people should indulge," states a pupil.

"Reading makes people very conversational," declares another. Under some circumstances

this result might be desirable ; one can, however, imagine cases where it could not be so considered. But,

"Reading does you good all over you. It makes you stand up straight and take lots of air and strengthens the muscles of the mind."

This may be considered a correct, practical, and comprehensive view of a most important branch of instruction.

"In America," says Ernest Legouv  , "reading aloud is considered one of the chief studies in the public schools—one of the bases of primary education." Yet who could believe it on hearing pupils mumble, stumble, halt, and choke over some of the simplest sentences of their mother tongue? What chaotic grammar, what mutilated rhetoric, what utter lack of sense!

"Reading is the first of human blessings," says Prof. Bell. "It is the chief of all the arts of life. It annihilates for the mind all obstacles of time and space. To speak is human, but to read is divine. It is the divinity, the intelligence in man that reads."

So we think when we listen to the rendering of a "poetical extract."

"In a bower of fragrant roses the musicians now compete. Blowing trumpets with their noses they inhale the odors sweet.

"See the Queen how sad and tearful as the King cuts off her head.

One bright tress of hair at parting how she wishes she were dead.



We may not be specially interested in Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, with their companions the Levites, until we are told that "they read in the book in the law of God distinctly and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading." Thus does the prophet Nehemiah give us incidentally a fine elocution lesson. To get the sense should be the first object in all reading, and there should be some sense worth getting in whatever is read. Reading aloud requires the skillful use of the entire vocal apparatus,—a purely physical exercise, the success of which is dependent upon practice.

The Superintendent of Schools in one of our largest cities has made wise provision for this branch of study, saying with reference to it: "The great majority of children will have little use for reading as a fine art, but all must depend for general information in after-life upon their ability to gather thought from the printed page. Hence the importance of pupils comprehending what they read." Surely this "ability to gather thought from the printed page" must form the basis of all school-work.

"Choir, a band of sinners," affirms the small boy, glancing at his spelling-book.

The result of an equally hasty glance at his grammar reveals that

"A pronoun is a word used inside of a noun."

"In the use of verbs the order of time must be deserved."

Astonishing facts are learned in physiology:

"The body is projected from the effect of sudden shocks."

"The albumen is about forty thousand parts of the blood."

"In the movement of the heart the two auricles contact."

"The action of the larynx is to deform the voice."

He gathers many facts from history:

"The Romans had made no naval conquest because they possessed no feet."

"The soldiers marched down the hill pantaloons after pantaloons."

"Carthage was taken by Cicero who was set on fire and continued to rage for seventeen days."

"The Crusades were millinery expeditions undertaken by the Christians."

"The cotton-gin was invaded by Whitney in 1794."

"At the close of the last war the Federal Army nominated and numbered one million men."

"The Indians were of a weak constitution and morality was great among them."

"When the news of the Stamp Act arrived Boston was muffled and rang a funeral peal."

How valuable the "thoughts" thus "gathered"!

Here is a gem from a certain First Reader :

“This is Jane’s doll. It is a new doll. Jane will make doll a dress. Doll cannot walk or hear or talk.”

This is supposed to be a vast improvement upon former “Firsts,” whose stereotyped lesson usually ran in this wise :

“I see a cat. The cat is on the mat,” etc., plunging the helpless little one into an endless maze of cats and bats and hats and mats and rats and vats. Occasionally this inspiring intellectual exercise was varied by the introduction of a new animal :

“I see a pig. The pig is big. The big pig can dig,” etc., stringing along harmonious and familiar monosyllables through all the changes of jig and fig and rig and wig, *apropos* of the original pig. No wonder children “hate such books,” and that they scoff at the information that “Doll cannot walk or hear or talk.” Many of our reading-books fill children’s mouths with intellectual husks which they are expected to swallow with avidity, and digest to mental profit.

Such “reading lessons” remind one of the school presided over by Bradley Headstone and attended by Charley Hexam, where “Young women were expected to profess themselves enthralled by the good child’s book, the Adventures of Little Margery, who resided in the village cottage by the mill ; severely reproved and

morally squashed the miller when she was five and he was fifty ; divided her porridge with the singing birds ; denied herself a new nankeen bonnet on the ground that the turnips did not wear nankeen bonnets, neither did the sheep who ate them," etc., etc., etc.

Of all the fine "rules for reading," the one devised by some well-meaning idiot is the most destructive to common sense,—*"Always keep the voice up at a comma and drop it at a period."* Uncounted hours of hard work are spent by faithful teachers—firm in the belief that the antiquity of this rule proves its value—in forcing upon pupils this punctuation paralysis. *"Oh, the pity of it, Iago, the pity of it !"* that innocent little children should be made to believe that pause and inflection depend not upon sense, but upon grammatical construction !

And what surpassing wisdom is shown in impressing a child with the idea that the worst errors in reading are verbal ones, and in putting the entire class, like a pack of hounds, on the scent of the nervous and breathless reader, ready to fall upon him and tear him if by any chance he leaves out or puts in a word !

Is not the cause of nine-tenths of the senseless, disagreeable reading, so common in our schools, due to the fact that children, from the beginning of their school work, conceive the notion that reading is simply the utterance of

words, and the glibber the utterance, the better the reading?

A knowledge of spelling, distinct articulation, correct pronunciation, even the definition of words,—while these things are no obstacles to good reading, they are not Reading, any more than boards, nails, bricks, and mortar are houses. "The letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive."

Will Carleton has given us a description of a reading class in which, even with distressing disregard of the letter, the spirit tended to intellectual life and interest:

"That row of elocutionists which stood so straight in line,  
And charged at standard literature with amiable design;  
In Romance and Philosophy we settled many a point.  
And made what poems we assailed to creak at every joint;  
We took a hand at History, its altars, spir·s, and flames,  
And uniformly mispronounced the most important names;  
We did not spare the energy in which our words were clad;  
We gave the meaning of the text with all the light we had;  
And many authors that we love you with me will agree  
Were first time introduced to us in District No. Three."

Jean Jacques Rousseau says very wisely, "Much attention is paid to finding out the best methods of teaching children to read. The best method, the thing no one thinks of, is a desire to learn." But this desire does not appear to be fostered to any appreciable extent by the process carried on in countless school-rooms—as "required by the grade"—and thus described by some one who knows something about it: "In four lines



we had eighteen new words to be learned. To teach these words without drilling upon the sentences until reading degenerates into parrotry, involves so much weary word-calling that the patience of the kindest teacher and the attention of the most obedient class must wear out long before the task is done." This is not exactly "to join thinking with reading," which Isaac Taylor declares to be "one of the first maxims and one of the easiest operations."

But how about the result of a "a desire to learn"? Take the case of the ordinary child in the ordinary "well-to-do," middle-class family. In school, why is not his geography lesson quite as good—and sometimes better—material for elocutionary work than the regular reading book?—which in some cases he learns by heart and "reads" without even looking at it. At home there are daily papers, books, and magazines. He takes part in the conversation, thereby naturally and constantly increasing his vocabulary. He reads a story because he wants to read it. We may be reasonably sure that it is not about a horse that can't fly, or a fish that can't sing, or a dog that can't play the piano. Possibly it is about a boy who ran away to sea. If, in manifestation of our interest, we ask him to read it aloud, the probability is that we shall learn "the facts in the case," though the vocal expression of them may not be all that is desirable in the way of ease or accuracy. His interest in the story will

force upon him some knowledge of punctuation points, and he comes to a realizing sense of the fact that punctuation is really intended for a help instead of a hinderance. Having some human interest in the matter, he will read it in a human tone, as people talk,—and he knows as well as we do how they talk, if neither words nor subject are beyond his comprehension.

Still it is safe to say that the proper teaching of Reading is the most profitable, as it can be made the most pleasant work done in the school-room, for it is the key to all knowledge under the sun. A taste for reading, a love of books,—if our schools could but give these gifts to their graduates!

Says an English educator, "These are the days, unfortunately, in which only such things as pay in examination receive attention, and reading is not one of them," but sometimes we "by indirection find direction out," as has been lately proved in New York. The superintendent of that city writes: "We have found out where we can reduce the work in many studies by combination." (Would that the "finding out" had come years ago, although it is "better late than never.") "History has been made a reading exercise. It will be taught by reading and talking, and not so much for elocution as to rouse the intellect and waken the interest." Here, indeed, in Dundreary dialect, is the "killing of two stones with one bird." May it sing louder and more



cheerily than ever after the accomplishment of such desirable destruction !

And to reach the conclusion of the whole matter in the words of Thomas Carlyle : " If we think of it, all that the university or final highest school can do for us is still but what the first School began doing—teach us to Read," while we say a hearty amen to those other words of Ernest Legouv  , " In the name of physical and mental well-being, I demand that the art of reading aloud shall be ranked among the principal branches of public education."

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### CHAPTER III.

#### "THE SINS OF NUMBERS."

THE child who wrote " Arithmetic is the sins of numbers," told more truth than he intended. In many schools the teaching of arithmetic is carried not only to an unprofitable, but to an iniquitous extent, and might well lead one to exclaim with sore and sorrowful heart, " O Education ! What crimes are committed in thy name ! "

" Mathematics is that branch of science which the results are accomplished by brain work and is letters and figures and signs. These signs are Arabs and Romans and were first found in Europe."

Letters, Figures, and Signs. Add these to Words and the pupil's outfit is complete.

Just one year ago there was a tremendous rattling among the educational dry bones, caused by Gen. Francis A. Walker's bold attack upon the "figure fiend," by which name this mathematical monster has come to be known. As President of the Boston Institute of Technology, he is supposed to know, and to care, something about educational matters. His words can not be ignored or criticised as the wild, irresponsible, incendiary utterances of a fanatic determined upon educational arson,—and what are these words?

"It is one of the gravest accusations brought against our public schools as at present administered, that the old-fashioned readiness and correctness of ciphering have been to a large degree sacrificed by the methods which it is now proposed to reform. A false arithmetic has grown up and has largely crowded out of place that true arithmetic which is nothing but the art of numbers."

This "false arithmetic" is the name which he applies to the exercises in logic, or the art of reasoning, which, smuggled into mathematical instruction, he considers an abuse. If taught at all, he stipulates that they should be taken from books, "prepared by eminent teachers of the science of mind, and the work should be conducted by teachers competent to teach the art

of reasoning. This bastard arithmetic fails to perform the true function of that study of our public schools, while wasting the time of the pupils, perplexing their minds, worrying their tempers, rasping their nerves."

General Walker is perfectly fair in his way of dealing with this matter. He asks those who consider this "an extravagant denunciation" to plainly say so. He presents a domestic picture, an interior by the artist Education, which he believes every Boston father to have seen, and which thousands of other fathers in less favored localities have been privileged to look upon,— "children puzzling and worrying ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes over a practical problem," and after an evening spent in this way, going to bed hot, tired, and perhaps tearful, and altogether unfitted for that sound and healthful sleep which should close every child's day. "I have myself had four children in the grammar schools where home study was allowed, and each one of them in turn I have seen tormented in this way."

In a late magazine article he says in connection with this same matter, "I am myself no bad mathematician, but I have not infrequently been puzzled, and at times foiled, by the subtle logical difficulty running through one of these problems given to my own child. The head master of one of our Boston High Schools confided to me that he had sometimes been unable to unravel one of these tangled skeins in trying to help his own

daughter through her evening work.” This, then, must be the acme of development in our system,—the child becomes father to the man and the pupil surpasses the professor. “The wisdom you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.”

Another statement is made by the same authority, which teachers must sorrowfully admit to be true. “Pupils familiar with difficult theorems, and masters of complicated formulæ, often vitiate their work by simple numerical mistakes such as would have been impossible had they been properly trained in the earlier stages of their mathematical education. If the high schools are blamed for this, the masters justify themselves by alleging that pupils come to them without being able to add or multiply, subtract or divide, or even to count with accuracy.” As for these “earlier stages,” the grammar-school teachers admit the charge, but plead lack of time for thoroughness in the work required of them,—and not only in this branch, but in nearly all the others.

“To this complexion have we come at last.” High school teachers of Literature, History, Trigonometry, Astronomy, groaning together that their pupils do not know How to Spell, How to Read, How to Cipher! “There is something more than natural in this, if philosophy could find it out.”

The *Journal of Education* is responsible for

this statement : " In forty classes, one-half of them pupils above twelve years of age, there were several failures in the question, If you buy nine three-cent stamps and give a fifty-cent piece in payment, how much change will you receive ? " And the master of a Boston high school for this : " I was informed by the president of a Boston bank that, at an examination held with reference to an appointment in his institution, out of several graduates of various high schools of this vicinity, not one was found able to add the columns of figures given him, without errors. " And the comment is made by General Walker, " In a store, a shop, a factory, or on a railroad, a lad who cannot set down figures and add them rightly is little better than a cripple. Now if any greater wrong short of permanent injury to health, can be done a child than to send him into the world to earn his living, without the ability to conduct numerical operations accurately and with reasonable facility, it would be difficult to see what that injury would consist of. Employers have, literally, no use for boys who make mistakes in numbers. Such a failing offsets the best training, otherwise, of mind and hand. "

It would be well if with old Polonius we could

    " —find out the cause of this effect ;

    Or, rather say, the cause of this defect ;

    For this effect, defective, comes by cause. "

General Walker finds abundant explanation in



the fact that "nine-tenths of the time given to arithmetic is occupied by technical applications of numerical principles, or are worse than wasted by logical puzzles unsuited to the child's age and mental strength."

Some of the remaining tenth is devoted to the expansion of the intellect on the technical terms of the science.

"Substraction is the minuend and the subtracted end."

"When there are equal numbers it is called muletiplication."

"A partial product is one of the things you multiply with."

"A quotient is a prime factor and is always a number or some part of a number."

"A composite number is just the same as a prime factor."

"Eagles, dimes, and mills make all a man's money, and sometimes he has not got any Mills."

A member of the Boston School Board, Dr. Samuel Eliot, says, "Arithmetic, like any other study in the schools, is merely a means, not an end. Give it the lion's share and it will play the lion's part," and it generally gets the lion's share. Among the original "three Rs" it stood "first and foremost," and like truth, described by Plato, was considered "the beginning of every good thing in heaven or earth." But why? General Walker quotes those who believe that "in sound educational theories,



the exercises given to young pupils ought to be difficult, complicated, perplexing, and distressing in order that the child's mind and spirit may undergo a due preparation for the difficult duties and hard problems of life, one enthusiastic writer of this school going so far as to declare that it is essential to good education that the sums set for the pupil should be not only difficult, but sometimes actually impossible to him in his then stage of development." This, being interpreted, must mean, He must swallow what he can't even take into his mouth ; he must see things invisible to his sight, handle things beyond his reach ; in short, he must do what is impossible to be done. Well may the poor victim exclaim in the words of Emerson,

"The Asmodean feat is mine,  
To spin my sand heap into twine."

But this able champion for the children has not trusted entirely to his own judgment in the case. He quotes Sir William Hamilton, England's greatest philosopher in this century: "That mathematics can, possibly educate to any active exercise of the power of observation, either as reflected upon ourselves or as directed on the affairs of life and the phenomena of nature, will not be maintained. That they do not cultivate the power of generalization is equally apparent. Are mathematics, then, of no value as an instrument of mental culture? To

this we answer that their study, if pursued in moderation, may be beneficial in the correction of a certain vice, and in the formation of its corresponding virtue. The vice is the habit of mental distraction ; the virtue, the habit of continuous attention. This is the single benefit to which the study of mathematics can justly pretend in the cultivation of the mind."

G. Stanley Hall, Professor of Pedagogics in the Johns Hopkins University, writes: "The purer the mathematics for boys of from ten to fourteen years of age, the better, it seems to me. Many of our arithmetics presuppose algebra and geometry. Problems in brokerage, architecture, custom-house practices, etc. are taught just as in the old Hindoo mathematics a taste for poetry, and in mediæval arithmetics moral and religious maxims and even systems, as well as historical information, were inculcated in the form of 'sums.'"

Perhaps the arithmetic of the Middle Ages is responsible for some of the following statements:

"Brokerage is the allowance for the brakerage and leekage of bottles."

"Insurance is when you die or burn up your money and the insurance office pays you for it."

"Exchange in Europe is when you go through London, Paris and places."

"When you exchange money all you have to do is to get the right change."

"The payment of a note on the back is called an enforcement."

"Accurate interest is according to the number of dates, the days, and the interest."

Prof. Hall also says, in words more truthful than complimentary: "American teachers seem to me to have spun the simple and immediate relations and properties of number over with pedantic difficulties. The four rules, fractions, factoring, decimals, proportion, per cent, and roots, is not this all that is essential? The best European text-books I know do only this, and are in the smaller compass, for they look only at facility in pure number-relations, which is hindered by the irrelevant material publishers and bad teachers use as padding."

George H. Howison, Professor of Philosophy in the University of California, declares, "My experience and my theories, founded on my professional studies and practice, have alike made it with me a matter of settled conviction that not only in mathematical, but in all elementary training, though in elementary mathematical teaching pre eminently, the first thing is to get the pupil perfectly familiar with, and as nearly as possible infallibly accurate, in fundamental facts and operations. I believe our current practice in this respect has for some years—say the last thirty—been going seriously wrong."

It must have been during this period that there came into being

"The metric system of waits and measures. Its just acoming into fashion in the U. States."

Perhaps other equally perspicacious definitions came into fashion when "current practice" made a start in this wrong direction.

"If there are no units in a number you have to fill it up with all zeros."

"Units of any order are expressed by writing in the place of the order."

"A factor is sometimes a faction," and sometimes it makes an equal amount of trouble.

"If fractions have a common denominator, find the difference in the denominator."

"Interest on interest is confound interest," though a man may sometimes be confounded by getting neither principal nor interest. Yet the principal is, after all, of very little account if

"Principal is not valuable like interest and is never paid."

"The rule for proportion is to multiply it by all the terms."

Readers of history may think that they understand the motive of Wat Tyler, who headed a rebellion against Parliament five hundred years ago. The hero of this insurrection is set forth by a pupil as

"What Tyler was a taxgatherer in the reign of Richard Second." And when we learn that

"A Pole tax is laid on top of your head," we

cannot so much wonder that he found a hundred thousand men ready to resent the injury, though after all, that is not so bad as a battle-ax applied to the same place.

"You can find a hypothesis if you have a base perpendicular," although that may depend somewhat upon what kind of a hypothesis you desire to find.

"When you multiply two numbers together they had ought to be just equal." But things are not always what they ought to be, even in the "exact sciences."

"The parties are bound together in insurance by policy," not the only parties who appear to be bound together in the same way.

"The underwriters are the sure parties."

"A tax on a man is called a poll tax when he has not any property."

"No man will live long enough to be ensured unless he has great expectation of life."

But Reform never takes an express train to travel in, and was never known to hurry to catch the one it does take. Very lately a parent ventured to write to one of the Boston dailies what is presumably a statement of facts and an honest expression of opinion :

"Has the reform voted in last year's school board, set on foot by General Walker, taken the back track? I fully believe that our children are taxed most unreasonably and beyond their strength in working over sums which are simply



puzzles, and which could be of no possible service in business life. I know a boy who worked last evening for more than two hours over one sum. His other studies, which were vastly more important, were neglected. Arithmetic makers seem to have exhausted themselves in compiling puzzling sums which our boys and girls, in attempting to solve, are wasting energies which might be much better employed."

Within forty-eight hours appeared an indignant reply to the communication, written by a "Boston Teacher," and about six times as long as the complaint.

"There are more than 60,000 children in the Boston public schools. Of these probably, not a thousand have home lessons in mathematics, not two per cent., and of these probably not a hundred, or one pupil in six hundred, are worked beyond their strength over problems in mathematics. There may be some, for it is unreasonable to suppose that every one of the 1200 teachers is strictly judicious, but admitting that one in five hundred is overworked, is that a sufficient ground for a wholesale condemnation?"

"There is too much of this condemnation without knowledge and without investigation. It is laughable to teachers, or would be if it were not a serious matter, to read many of the things that are said against the schools which fifteen minutes' inquiry at the nearest school-house would show to be not only baseless, but purely nonsensical."



Not even "one child in five hundred" ought to be "overworked," nor would be if there were not some error somewhere. If only "one pupil in six hundred" finds the work beyond his strength what a simple matter to "promote backward" the one six-hundredth of a school, and thereby not only preserve the welfare of the child, but the reputation of the school. To paraphrase the well-known words of Carlyle, "That one child should be overworked who has capacity for suffering from its effects, this I call a tragedy, were it to happen twenty times a minute—as by some calculation it does."

While many "purely nonsensical things are said against the schools," there is some "condemnation" which has the appearance, at least, of being the result of "knowledge." Of course the parents whose money supports these schools and whose children fill them, have really no interest in their management, and should not be allowed to interfere with them. It is sheer presumption for a father or mother to venture any sort of criticism. But as long as a few of them will be so impertinent, disagreeable truths will occasionally be uttered in spite of protest.

But whatever progress mathematical reform is making in Boston, there are many other places where it is either creeping at a snail's pace or standing stock-still. A few days ago a meeting of principals was held not three miles from the largest city in the Old Bay State, during which

one of the gentlemen made the astounding statement, "Some teachers of arithmetic deserve capital punishment for the incomprehensible problems they give their pupils."

The profession has a large number of Pumblechooks who, it is to be hoped, may be brought to see the error of their mathematical ways. Poor Pip was a representative sufferer from the mathematical mania of this "corn-chandler in the nearest town," never content to keep his figuring to his own affairs. "On my politely bidding him good morning, he said, pompously, 'Seven times nine, boy?' and before I had swallowed a morsel he began a running sum that lasted through breakfast. 'Seven?' 'And four?' 'And eight?' 'And six?' 'And two?' 'And ten?' And so on. And after each figure was disposed of, it was much as I could do to get a bite or a sup before the next one came."

And the Pumblechook by the name of Murdstone, who was eternally tormenting poor little David Copperfield with his "If I go into a cheesemonger's shop and buy five thousand double-Gloucester cheeses at fourpence-halfpenny each, present payment—" Perish the whole of them with their perennial propositions!

How strange it is that so many children are poor mathematicians, and that the majority of them detest arithmetic even as cordially as they do grammar, when we "require them to extract the cube root of three-sevenths; pile one irregu-

lar and jagged fraction on top of another, and then ask them to divide or multiply this by an arithmetical monstrosity as hideous and impossible as itself."

But ignoring the children's choice in the matter, "All this sort of thing in the teaching of young children is either useless or mischievous. It is bad psychology, bad physiology, and bad pedagogics. Doubtless this practice would long since have been reformed but for the inveterate superstition of the New England mind that it is well the child should be worried and perplexed in education, and that out of this agitation of the nerves and this strain upon the mental powers, proceed health and vigor. I denounce that theory in its extreme state as a relic of barbarism closely akin to one of the most savage superstitions of primitive manhood."

Knowing the burdens laid by life upon all the sons of men, knowing the struggles and the trials awaiting each one of them, shall we make even their preparation for bearing these burdens and fighting these battles, a heavy and a grievous thing? To torture the child now because most likely he will be tortured in the future! The educator who would advance or apply such a theory should be barred out of every school-room and set to building fences to keep cattle out of corn. Discipline and development,—grand words, grand things, but yet capable of misinterpretation and misapplica-

tion. Not until it is found that there is saving grace in chalk or slate-pencil, that man's spiritual destiny can be worked out in perplexing problems upon the blackboard, will there be any excuse for making arithmetic an instrument of torture.

A most pleasing discovery has just been made in New York. Manual training for a long time hung about the thresholds of the school-rooms of the metropolis. It modestly hinted at its desire to be allowed to enter. It grew bolder and declared it would come in whether welcome or no; it grew bolder yet, to the extent of pounding upon the doors and even threatening the destruction of the building unless admitted immediately. "To maken vertu of nécessité," some trouble was taken to prevent this threat from being carried into execution, by finding room for the persistent applicant. This was done by combinations and reductions in different studies. Behold the happy result, both for the former occupants of the building and the new-comer at last installed among them. "We have found out," states the Superintendent, "that the work in arithmetic can be reduced  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. in the highest grades."

Most fortunate finding out! Will it not be well worth the while of other superintendents to explore in the same way their particular provinces, to the end that similar combinations,

economies, and advantages may be brought to view? Let us considerably refrain from asking why such a discovery was not sooner made. The question savors too much of the spirit which would attack a fallen foe.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### "THE VERB AND ITS NOMITIVE."

"GRAMMAR is something to talk good and is devided into digrams on the blagboard. I cant never learn to do grammar."

So much for the definition of this particular kind of mental pabulum with which children have been fed since the days—fifty years before Christ was born—when Dionysius Thrax produced the first Greek grammar for Roman scholars. His name would not be loved by the youth of this day, even were it known to them; neither would that of Plato, who first made it necessary to discriminate between noun and verb; or Aristotle, who went farther and increased the list of "perplexing parts of speech."

"A noun is Something that is a noun or a name."

"A Proper Noun is when it is not a Common Noun."

"A pronoun is when you don't want to say a



noun and so you say a pronoun. It is when it is not a pronoun but a noun."

There is a sort of mental dizziness engendered by more than one perusal of this most lucid elucidation. "A confused notion," says a popular writer on education, "is worse than none, and the clever boy, under some systems of education, is worse than the dullard."

"An adjective tells you all about it." Eureka ! At last we can "solve the riddle of the painful earth" in a totally unexpected manner. "All about it !" What comfort for the curious in that short and simple sentence ! Truly, there is more in this much-abused science than at first appears ; but when we learn from the next paper that

"An adjective is an objection to something," we are harassed with painful doubts as to the real individuality and usefulness of this particular sort of word.

"An adverb is some sort of a verb put onto another kind of a verb to tell something about it."

"Adverbible phrase is when you have a sentence and you say something in it about something and its a adverb insted of a noun or pronon or verb or adgetive than its adverbible phrase."

Like "poor Jo," this boy might have said with truth, "I'm a-gropin', a-gropin'."

"The difference between a phrase and a claus



is the phrase can be in the claus and sometimes it is."

One can hardly help speculating as to where the phrase is when it is not in "the claus."

"A conjunction is your very much surprised at something."

Possibly at the definition.

"A interjection is throwing words in a sentence o dear is interjection because you can't pass it with anything."

Perhaps Prof. Bain is not altogether wrong when he says, "The difficulties of grammar are the difficulties of all science couched in technical language. When the age of grammar is reached, the problem of teaching it solves itself. It is a practical science having general principles which become rules." Perhaps "the age of grammar" thus referred to is synonymous with "the age of discretion" which often comes late in life and sometimes not at all; at any rate he also says, "Experience must have impressed teachers with the futility of attempting to teach grammar to children. It is the worst economy to anticipate the mind's natural aptitude for any subject, and the aptitude for grammar does not exist at eight or nine years of age."

The "plague of words" which afflicts so many children of the present day, is nowhere so violent and so contagious as in grammar lessons, where "sound lacking sense" is the rule rather than the exception.

"The accidents of a noun is what happens to it."

"Pronouns agree with gender number and numbers in the passive voice."

"Adjectives of more than one syllable are repared by adding some more syllables."

"A pleonasm is used for a substantive in nomitive independent."

"An adverb is used to mortify a noun and is a person place or Thing."

"Parsing an adverb is when we compare it with its degrees."

"Sometimes an adverb is turned into a noun and then it becomes a noun or pronoun."

"The Subjunctive mood is used in futurity when contingency and conjunctions or doubt are expressed in dependent clauses."

Truly, as says Sylvia to Valentine of Verona, "A fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly shot off." But is this the wisdom that is "justified of her children"?

"Grammar," says another writer on this subject, "is coming to be taught more in accordance with common sense and the needs of the pupil; yet a large number still cling to nonsensical jumbles about moods, tenses, and general technicalities to the exclusion of letter writing and other forms of grammatical composition."

That much of the "jumble of moods, tenses, and technicalities," if not nonsensical to the

mature and logical mind, is more or less so to the immature and undeveloped, is proved by the experience of every teacher who takes up with young children the formal study of this science.

"Nouns denoting male and female and things without sex is neuter."

"The cow jumped over the fence is a transitive verb because fence is the name of any thing and has no sex."

"A masculine noun is third person plural number and has no neuter because it has no gender sex."

"The degrees of comparison is I study you study we study."

"He speaks lowly lowly is an adjective of how he speaks and is deprived from low and compared low lower lowest."

"Voice is the changing of our voice. We have a high and low voice. When we get hoarse we haven't much of a voice."

"The indicative mood represents the verb as acting or going to. I shall go."

"The potential mode shows something that may can or must be done. I might stay."

"The subjunctive represents the verb as possibly it might be done. If I can."

"The infinitive is when the verb is going to. To dress you must hurry."

"The imperative is a word in a commanding form. You shall."

Now after years of maundering among moods,

modes, and manners, oftentimes with the happy results just stated, the announcement is made that no two persons agree on the subjunctive mood in English, and as for the potential, like the Chinese, it "must go."

H. C. Penn states in *Education*: "The potential not only fails to dissipate the darkness that envelops our native tongue, but it robes Latin and Greek and German in darkness thrice dense. Common sense, then, requires the potential to be banished from the grammar."

The child who gave the definition of this word, "Potential very powerful but not possible to act," would probably consider the banishment a very wise thing under the circumstances.

An article on "Pedantry in Girls' Schools" by Elizabeth M. Sewell, an English teacher, was lately published in the *Nineteenth Century*. Among other admirable things she says, concerning this special subject: "Is it the best possible use of time, so inestimably valuable in these early years, to spend it in learning the names which grammarians have affixed to the different parts of a sentence, and determining whether co-ordinate sentences are of the copulative, adversative, or causative class? Educated persons have the power of speaking grammatically, though they may never have been called upon to write ten complex sentences with an adjective sentence qualifying the subject, and ten more

with an adjective sentence qualifying the object. Will not young people as they grow up, if they have been perfectly grounded in the simple elementary parts of grammatical knowledge, study these distinctions and definitions for themselves, and learn in a few days what in childhood and early youth it would have taken weeks and months to acquire ? ”

“ Is it wholly through the dulness of boys’ natures ? ” asks J. W. Hales, another English teacher, “ that they do not love the Conjugation at first sight, or conceive a passionate attachment for the Irregular Verbs ? What a queer thing their nature would be if it did kindle in them either flame ! At all events it does not. ” These last words carry their own emphasis.

“ Why does the verb *dare* govern a dative, as well as an accusative case ? ” asked a conscientious teacher. “ To make it harder for us, ” was the boy’s answer ; and it is probable that many boys see only that same “ tantalizing exasperation ” when they are set to search for the connection between grammatical cause and effect.

Comenius began the reaction against “ learning masses of meaningless rules ”—meaningless so far as they prove to the child strange tools of which he knows only the unfamiliar names, and not the use. John Locke helped along the reform, as did also Milton, who complained that “ our children are forced to stick unreasonably in these grammatic flats and shallows. ”



Roger Ascham inveighed in "The Scholemaster," against "the Rewles that are so Busilie taught by the Master and so Hardlie learned by the Scholer in all common Scholes," saying, "The common waie to read the Grammer alone by itself is tedious for the Master, hard for the Scholer, colde and uncumfortable for them bothe." He adds, with some pardonable pride concerning his own illustrious pupil, "Our moste noble Queen Elizabeth never yet tooke Greek or Latin Grammer in her Hande after the first declininge of a Noun and a Verb."

"A passive transitive verb always affirms and relates its subject as he brok a winder."

"A dejective verb is when it wants some of its parts, it is auxiliary and impursenal."

"A participle is a verb of expression an action in state it is an adjective and has a passive simplification."

Such are a few of the natural results of our persistent use of polysyllabic symbols of thought in training the child, to whom the sign must always be more significant than the thing signified. Often the thought of which words are the outward and visible token is as obscure to the child as is the geological strata of the earth over which he rolls his marbles. He is overwhelmed, smothered, strangled, paralyzed, and buried alive under "words, words, words." Is it strange that the victim who, like Dr. Johnson in the construction of his dictionary, is



"lost in lexicography," comes to believe that all books, schools, teachers, education, life itself is resolvable into "words, words, words"? With Sallust we may say "Enough eloquence, little wisdom," for while "nothing is so cheap as words" they are really purchased at an exorbitant price when they cost us intellectual life and liberty.

Southey's "Old Kaspar" tells his grandchildren of the "Battle of Blenheim" with much interest and detail :

" ' But what good came of it at last ?'

Quoth little Peterkin.

' Why, that I cannot tell,' quoth he,

' But 'twas a famous victory,' "

and Kaspar's family is not the only one in which might be propounded the significant question of little Peterkin. After skirmishes with nouns, verbs, and adjectives ; hand-to-hand fights with prepositions, conjunctions, and "adverbible phrases"; bold attacks, more or less successful, upon the Regulars and Irregulars of the enemy's army ; assaults upon "nomitiv objectiv and posesiv cases," "imperial mood" and "parsed tense," and courageous cavalry charges through the formidable ranks of relatives and antecedents, subjects and predicates, constructions, conjugations, modifications, appositions, applications, and exceptions, the conqueror may well look with some perplexity upon the mutilated grammatical remains, and question the value of

his victory. In some respects it is as unprofitable and as unsatisfactory as that of the military maneuver of the King of France, who, with forty thousand men, "marched up a hill and then marched down again," for, says Wm. Hosea Bal-lou, "What we call our grammar is a heterogeneous conglomeration, the laughing-stock of foreign scholars, and the despair of our own,"—and is such a foeman worthy of so much steel?

"A sentence is words on the blackboard, with lines all through it, to show you what it is made of," is an outgrowth of the "new method" in the science of language, whereby an innocent collection of words is hung, drawn, and quartered, displayed upon the blackboard, "with lines all through it," as spare-ribs, hams, and shoulders are exhibited on the iron hooks of the butcher's shop. Diagramming, as this modern manipulation is euphoniously called, is not, *per se*, irrational or ridiculous. It can be used for mental stimulus as profitably as the beef or mutton can be used for physical nourishment. But we do not give beef to babies without danger of gastric disturbance, nor can we demand diagrams from young brains without running much mental risk.

In the wise words of the preacher, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to break down and a time to build up," but the time for grammatical or any other sort of diagramming was not specified by the preacher. Probably he considered

that by the time the human intellect had reached a phase of development in which such gymnastics were possible, there would be developed along with it enough of that element technically called common sense to prevent youthful brains from practising upon these syntactical horizontal and cross-bars. In witnessing the pitiable contortions of these dazed young athletes, we are reminded of a statement written by one of them concerning the mental condition of our famous Rip Van Winkle after awaking from his slumber of a score of years. "He was so bewildered he thought he had taken leave of his sentences."

Says Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst in the *Forum* for March, 1888: "The way for a boy to learn to talk correctly is to talk subject to correction, not to apply himself to linguistic anatomy, surgery, and dissection. I studied grammar in the ordinary way about three weeks—just long enough to find out what a genius some people can show in putting asunder what God hath joined together. It is a splendid device for using up a boy's time and souring his disposition, but it will not keep him out of the grave or help him to pay rent and butcher's bills."

"No child," says Dr. Wm. A. Hammond of New York, "ever learned to speak good English from studying grammar. It is the most ingenious device for forcing an immature brain into early decrepitude that the cunning of man has yet

devised. The only reason why it does not do more harm is that not one in ten of the pupils that come out of our schools know anything about it." This opinion is confirmed by Prof. Hill of Harvard University. "The methods of the schools are radically defective. Every year Harvard graduates a certain number of men whose manuscript would disgrace a boy of twelve. Yet the college cannot be blamed, for she can hardly be expected to conduct an English school for adults."

Says Mr. Wm. E. Mead, in the *Academy*: "If the time now spent on English grammar in grammar schools could be reduced four-fifths, and the time spent on some great English classic read in illustration of the few grammatical principles worth knowing, it would be a reform in the right direction. Boys who leave school at the age of twelve are far more likely to pick up grammar from literature than they are to pick up literature from grammar."

In 1769 James Hamilton, an English merchant, took lessons in German on condition that he should not be "bothered" with the grammar. He read with his teacher a book of anecdotes, translating it word for word. After twelve lessons he could read an easy German book. In 1815 he came to New York, published a pamphlet upon his methods, and undertook to teach adults in fifteen lessons to translate St. John's Gospel from French into English, but

found ten lessons amply sufficient. He also claimed to be able to give boys as much knowledge of Latin in six months as they usually learn in six years.

Such violent reaction from the old cut and dried methods that had grown so tedious and distasteful to the generations, could not fail to produce a profound impression, especially when the new style of instruction proved practically successful. Grammar, like money, medicine, and machinery, is not an end but a means. It is not likely to be studied for its own sake when this truth becomes generally recognized; but it has taken a long time to even partially convince the world that language is a living organism for the use and behoof of human beings; not an array of skeletons to be kept in orderly condition in a musty cabinet, or a mass of dead flowers to be properly pressed and preserved between the leaves of a book. Hamilton's innovation was the forerunner of our present Natural Method, the Berlitz, and Meisterschaft methods, which within a few years have revolutionized the learning of languages, and, as advertisers state concerning the price of desirable articles, "brought them within the reach of all."

But even in these improved circumstances we must take heed to our ways, for our linguistic locomotives cannot—any more than our literal ones—run without suitable rails and road-beds.



In the increased speed and comfort of our polyglot palace cars, we are not to consider ourselves independent of the car tracks, though it is no longer necessary to keep our eyes and our thoughts constantly fixed upon them.

Says Francis W. Lewis of the Rhode Island Normal School: "If an English education could be made to include by means of its language course more real thought discrimination, we should not have to depend so much upon classically trained men for our thinking." Perhaps too, with some of old Roger Ascham's "Plaine construinge, diligent parsinge, dailie translatinge, cheerfull admonishinge, heedfull amendinge," we might have a little grace as well as grammar in the original sentences of some of our school children.

"The bells tolled merrily for a rich millionaire."

"Cora Brown was fortunately the possessor of a birthday, for she was the daughter of rich friends."

"When Mr. Johnson took to love of drink so much it made his family on comfortable."

"The only heat they had was from the end of a candle a poor woman had given them and it was rather cold."

"Two carriages were strolling at great speed while the snow was falling fastly."

"As she entered the room a cold damp smell met her sight. With this she burst down sobbing like a child."



"She forgot the Lord and all his blessings and after that she went and got married."

"The minister's wife had nine small children each one of which was one year younger than the other. Though poor she was a diligent woman," after all of which we cannot possibly be surprised to read that "she fell down scattering her senses in all directions."

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## CHAPTER V.

### "THE CIRCUS OF THE EARTH."

"JOGGRAPHY is a 'scription of the circus of the earth." ✓

Half-a-dozen hands raised to suggest a correction. The teacher nods to one of the eager faces.

"You may tell us, Johnnie."

"Jogfy is 'scription of the suffis of the earth."

The "committee-man" smiles encouragingly upon the glib reciter.

"What do you mean by 'description'?" he blandly asks.

"A 'scription is tellin' you about it."

"Very good. What is geography a description of?"

"'Scription of the earth."

"What is the earth?"

---

Silence. Blank stare from the class.

"You know, of course, what the earth is?"

One hand raised cautiously, followed by

"Europe, Asia, Africa."

"Have you ever seen the earth, boys?"

Class in chorus, "No, sir," with a feeble tenor solo somewhere, "Yes, sir, on the map."

One of our daily papers narrates the following:

"Mamma," inquired little Waldo Bunker of Boston, who is spending the winter in Florida, "What is that body of water!"

"The Atlantic ocean, my dear."

"The Atlantic ocean!" exclaimed little Waldo in amazement. "Why, I thought the Atlantic ocean was near Boston."

Prof. Geikie in the *Popular Science Monthly* remarks: "Every question in geography should be one which requires for its answer that the children have actually seen something with their own eyes and taken note of it." Little Waldo had evidently done both of these things, and yet was "all at sea" on the bosom of the broad Atlantic.

The *Christian Union* reports the case of a child in a western prairie country who was studying geography and asked her teacher if the Alps and Andes were as high as the steeple of the Congregational church.

Says Horace Mann, "In geography we put a quarto-sized map, or a globe no larger than a goose-egg, into a child's hand and invite him to

spread out his mind over continuous oceans and archipelagoes at once. This does not expand the mind, but belittles the object to the nutshell capacity of the mind."

This invitation to "spread out the mind" is courteously accepted, and the mind proceeds to spread in the following manner upon a slate provided for the purpose:

"A arkipelago is made up off a great lot of little islands all round in the ocean."

"An archipelago is when there is a good many islands. Coney island isent an archipelago."

"An archpelago is something that casts up fire and water Vesuvius."

"That a youth of ten should conceive the plains of India with their vertical sun, peculiar vegetation, strange animals, and dusky population, is not to be supposed," says Prof. Bain in his "Education as a Science."

There are other countries also which the youthful mind can not comprehend.

"Part of Australia is vague," asserts one, without danger of contradiction.

"Australeya ust to be used by the English to keep men on that was not bad enough to be killed. Some farms would raise as much as five hundred thousand. The English long ago ust to send their prisoners there when they did anything not worth hanging."

"Australia is a very large country in Europe

and has all its bad men and they have found a great many gold and diamonds there and Sidney is one of the chief countries in it which is in New South Wales."

Sometimes the mind does not spread quite far enough, as in the case of the little Nantucket girl who asserted that "California is west of Off Island," a certain body of land surrounded by water, quite near her own home. Possibly the answer might have been accepted if she had only specified how far west.

The African continent has for a long time piqued our curiosity, and the source of its largest river has been persistently searched for; yet somehow we fail to be satisfied with the statements intended to throw light on these hidden things:

"The interior of Africa is principally used for purposes of exploration."

"Africa has no interior and you can't explore it."

"The Nile is in New York a country of Africa."

In some other statements we receive the full value of "the sign," yet hardly grasp "the thing signified."

"The Gulf of St. Lawrence rises in Itaska Lake and empties into Mississippi."

"San Francisco is a river in Brazil."

"The capital of Kentucky is Frankfort on the Maine."

"Alexandria is the capitol of Russia."

Another feature of this country is that

"The serfs of Russia is little animals all white except the tips of their tails which is black."

"The Catskill mountains are also in Russia."

"London is the largest city of the United States or Russia or France."

If that particular pupil should "guess again" he might hit it.

One might well find himself in "Egyptian darkness" if

"Egypt is in Syria," and

"Syria is a kind of turpentine."

Some persons may be surprised to find that

"The greater antills are sugar, oranges, coffee and indigo."

"An alligator is the largest insect in North America."

"Leopards, tigers and elephants inhabit North America."

"The camel grows in Greenland."

"There is snakes all over the frigid zone."


"Bears are the growth of tropical countries."

"The tropics produce a great many kinds of wild beast and figs."

Some geographical statements tend to broaden our views. For instance,

"The climate of a country is trading with other countries."

"Domestic commerce is fishing. Foreign commerce is fishing with a pole."



"The boundaries of a country is things that go all round it."

"When we bound a country we tell where all the places are near it."

"Mountains is when the ground is all piled up high."

"Volcanoes are things you fire off Forth of July."

Horace Mann tells of a text-book of geography published in Massachusetts, claiming in its preface "special adaptation to children" on the second page of which occurred this paragraph,

"Zenith and Nadir—two Arabic words importing their own significance."

This will do to accompany a geography lesson which Rousseau tells of reading, beginning,

"What is the world?"

"A pasteboard globe," and he further adds, "When you are ready to teach this child geography, you get together your globes and your maps, and what machines they are! Why, instead of using all these representations, do you not begin by showing him the object itself so as to let him know what you are talking of? I venture to say that after two years of globes and cosmography, no child of ten, by any rules they give him, could find his way from Paris to St. Denis. And yet these are the knowing creatures who can tell you where Pekin, Ispahan, Teheran and all the countries of the world are!"



They can tell more than that, too, "just as easy as not."

"The time is never alike all over the earth."

"Valleys exist to hold up fissures in the earth's surface."

"The whole world has a structure which pervades North America."

"The earth is very eccentric. It has the most popular zone of the globe."

"All globes have imaginary lines and zones our globe has several of these."

"Tropical fruits are found all spread out where they grow in Cancer and Crapricon."

This sounds very much like a sentence printed in an old geography still in existence, "Albany has four hundred inhabitants all standing with their gable ends to the street."

Bain truly calls mathematical geography "the greatest task of the purely conceptive power," adding that "it requires very delicate manipulation on the part of the teacher." But the greatest skill as well as delicacy in handling the Tropic of Cancer, the North Pole, and a degree of longitude, will not prevent, in minds lacking this power of conception, such statements as

"The tropic of Cancer is a very hopeless disease"; indeed it is hopeless—when it reaches this stage.

"The Tropic of Cancer is something going round the earth to show you where you are";

this might be useful on a dark night or in a London fog.

"The Tropic of Cancer is south of an imaginary line drawn on the map and is reckoned from Greenland"; even a change in the syllable of the last word might leave much to be desired in the definition.

"Latitude and longitude is something dependent on the air"; truly this is giving to an "airy nothing" a name if not "a local habitation."

All that is needed to complete this profitable course of study is for the pupils to succeed in carrying out the command of a trustee,—

"Now, children, take your slates and draw two imaginary lines bisecting each other at an obtuse triangle."

Any human being who would require from little children knowledge of the artificial divisions of mathematical geography with their unintelligible terms, should be served as sinners are disposed of in a certain Italian city, if the following statement is intended to be believed :

"The streets of Venice is water and they have boats to sale in and if a man breaks the rules they take him out on the bridge and cut off his head or drown him." In some cases it might be well to do both in order "to make assurance double sure" that he would no longer torture the little ones.

In view of the stupid ways in which geography is taught and studied—not learned—it is refresh-

ing to read what the study might be made as set forth by the eloquent Herder :

"I know few sciences so rich in necessary and pleasant facts. I wonder how any noble, well-educated youth in the best years of his life should not love the science before all others. A knowledge of physical geography is as important as it is easily and pleasantly entertaining. It must be the most pleasing picture, full of art, plans, change. It travels through the earth, finds out about people, countries, and customs. If all these are made vivid, then it must be a stupid monster who by that means does not receive into his head and into his heart a great and refined perception." He thinks that there are many "short-sighted barbarians" who if they had only learned geography and history better in their youth "would not make the narrow bands of their heads a measure of the world, and the customs of their corner the rule and guide of all times, climates, and people."

There is a little flavor of this narrowness in the pupil's statement,

"The rapid growth of New York City as a commercial center can be accounted for by the fact that Castle Garden is located there."

Prof. Geikie says, "Geography serves as common ground on which the claims of literature, history, and science may be reconciled." Yet it is doubtful if he would endorse the statement of an amateur artist who wrote in reference to his

work—a map of Ireland,—“I had not room to put down the island on one side which Robinson Crusoe discovered and wrote his story books a good many centuries ago.”

Probably there is no study which can serve as well as geography to develop a sense of proportion and relation which can be carried into every line of life. In this respect it ranks with astronomy. Yet with all the array of maps which the child looks at with wide-open but uncomprehending eyes, he sometimes receives so little idea of the facts they are intended to show that he writes,

“The United States is most as big as England.”

That England with Wales is not larger than the State of Georgia; that with the addition of South Carolina, the two States will represent more area than England, Wales and Scotland combined,—how many pupils in geography learn anything of such proportions as these? An interesting experiment in this matter was lately tried in a grammar-school class, every member of which had made a creditable showing in a difficult written examination. Several of them believed England to be “the largest country in the world,” because they had “studied the most about it,” and “because it had so many kings and queens more than any other country ever had,” and “because London was there,” and “because it was,” as a little homesick Britisher wrote on his slate, “so orful far off.” The

prevailing idea seemed to be that France ranked next in size—perhaps because of kings, queens, or Paris—and that America stood third on the list.

"For to-morrow's lesson you may get from there to there," says the teacher, and the children "get" it. The lesson is "perfect"—"nobody missed a single word." Sure enough, not a word, but how about the ideas which the words are supposed to convey? These trustful and obedient children make even less opposition to this sort of provender than did the countryman who went for the first time into a city restaurant. After half an hour's diligent labor at a table, he meekly beckoned to the head-waiter who at once approached him, and to whom, holding up the bill of fare, he thus addressed himself, "Mister, I've et from thar to thar, an' ef it don't make no difference to you, I'd like to skip from thar to thar." Possibly the children would like to skip occasionally, though they refrain from mentioning the fact, perhaps from fear that it may make a difference to their head-waiter. And as an English teacher says, "We succeed in making our chickens eat, and if some of them can be brought to wax fat mentally, shall we not justify our wisdom?" But there is a suggestion of abnormal growth in

"Mt. Everest is the highest mountain known, its latitude being most 30 feet."

"Vesuvius is a highly cultivated plain rising on the shores of Naples."



"The temperate zone has a very mean temperature."

"New Zealand is a country of the cannibals, where they eat the Missunries they send there."

"Siberia is where the Czar of Russia goes to stay in his snow palace in Petersburg."

"Cape Horn is near the end of Africa on the way to California."

"The Isthmus of Panama is situated in a canal."

"The three longest rivers are Mississippi, Maine, and London."

"Cortes is not on the map of Mexico,"—and in some surprising statements in seismography:

"Earthquakes are bursts of heat."

"Earthquakes make sometimes a some slight motion of the earth," with the sadly significant and somewhat euphemistic statement,

"Earthquakes are never satisfactory."

The following is a report of a representative geography lesson in an English school :

" ' We will now take the coast line of South America from Cape Corrientes southward. The name of the village south of Corrientes ? ' "

" ' Loberia. ' "

" ' Next feature ? ' "

" ' Asunción Point. ' "

" ' Next ? ' "

" ' Bahia Blanca. ' "

" ' Next ? ' "

" ' Bermeja Head. ' "



" 'No, Brown, you have omitted two names of interest. What is the omission, Robinson?'

" 'Point Rasa.'

" 'Precisely. I fear you are a little weak in geography, Brown. Go on.'

" 'Norte Point, San Josef Peninsula, Delgada Point, Nuevo Gulf.'

"Wearisome hours were spent in committing huge lists of names to memory ; the stuff hung about in their minds with stupefying effect for a month or so ; then it all faded away and only a memory of sickening frivolity remained. What with length of rivers, heights of mountains, depths of oceans, and such like, it is probable that each pupil wasted three months of his priceless two years. The girls learned geography until they could draw a map of Jamaica, or Kamschatka, or Vancouver Island with perfect ease, and they thus gained a sort of useful knowledge which they easily forgot within three months. They could tell you the height of Mount Dwalaghiri to a foot, but of all things gracious and lovely they were left as ignorant as Bechuanas."

## CHAPTER VI.

## "SEEING INTO THINGS."

"HISTORY is seeing into things."

"Without the uses of History everything goes to the bottom."

"Ambition is the very element of History according to how it be used."

"And then trace back when antiquity was buried in the dark recesses of oblivion swaying for a ray of light to grapple a mystery which if to be recorded upon the pages of History would illuminate the whole industrial world."

"History is a most interesting study when you know something about it."

It is interesting, for example, to learn that

"Mohammed was born in the sacred city of Mecca, in the year 570. He did not go out into Public life until he was about 40 years of age he had always been a rich merchant he could neither read nor write after his fortyeth birthday he became a christian and went to the old communion of God. He fled July 15, 622 and died in 632 A.D. Hegira was the wife of Mohammed," though when we also learn that

"The Hegira was the flight of the Israelites into Egypt," the conflicting statements give us a considerable sense of bewilderment, which is not diminished by the third assertion,

"The Hegira was when Peter the hermit tried to get the Crusades from the holy Land."

Not every one cares about the particular historical event so variously described, but the comments of the Massachusetts teacher in whose class the story of Mohammed originated are certainly worthy of a moment's attention :

"If reform is your aim, it seems to me that the fact of these blunders being made by high-school pupils who in one or two years, sometimes in a few months, graduate and enter college, might be emphasized. The reasons for such displays I find is the fact that pupils enter the high school without knowing how to read."

If these last five words were italicized, the remark would be in order, "The italics are ours," but, to the thoughtful reader, neither italics nor comments are necessary. We are, however, reminded of a similar statement by one of our most popular educators: "Pupils often appear dull in grammar, geography, and history merely because they are poor readers. A child is not qualified to use any text-book until he is able to read with facility, as we are accustomed to speak, in groups of words."

*Apropos* of Peter and his Holy Wars, it will doubtless seem incredible—to anybody but a teacher—that some professional humorist did not perpetrate the following :

"The Crusaders were women who did not want

men to get drunk. My Ant Ann was a Crusader in Ohio."

"The Crusaders said that for nearly two centuries they were holy wars and did great good in the barbarous and beneficial change to society."

"These military expeditions were undertaken to rescue the tomb of Mohammed from the christians who were buried in Palestine."

"Peter the Hermit wanted to get the holy sepulchre out of the hands of the people and sovereigns of Europe."

"Peter the Third was a painful pilgrimage traveling all round noted for his monkey enthusiasm." This last may possibly have emanated from the brain that produced the definition, already quoted, "Monasteries, a place for mon- }  
sters." >

Evidently our same poor Peter has in some way become mysteriously identified with an English institution of a hundred years later:

"Magna Charta was a great man, and he was called Magna Charta because he used to go about preaching."

Next we are illuminated concerning the decree which plunged a whole nation into darkness:

"The feudal system was a law which was that everybody should have their lights out by eight o'clock in the evening."

The same country had another peculiar institution:

"Doomsday Book was a law that if any poor man should kill a deer they should have his eyes put out."

"The Wars of the Roses was between the Lombards who had the white rose, and the York who had the red rose. Result, The house of York was assassinated." "Assassinated"! The most daring imagination falters in its attempt to conceive what fate befell that unfortunate household.

To return again to the beginning of the calamity: "It was in the Reign of Richard II. Margaret the sister of the Queen was blind and her lover came to see her and he asked for a white rose and she kept picking red ones and the result was getting a flower for England."

Now we know all about it, notwithstanding the words of Rousseau on the subject of history. "Do you imagine," he says, "that the true understanding of events can be separated from that of their causes and effects, and that the historic and the moral are so far asunder that the one can be understood without the other? If you intend to estimate actions by their moral relations, try to make your pupils understand these relations, and you will discover whether history is adapted to their years."

"The men who have striven to get at the spirit of history, have found it by studying the individual," decides Prof. Root of Hamilton College. Probably it was one of the young men

striving to that end—too young, apparently, to strive successfully,—who discovered that

"Joan of Arc was rather pious and very genteel."

"Cromwell owed his elevation to his ascent to greatness, and because he was often in the senate and in the field of domestic retirement."

Another one discovers from this study of the individual that

"Zenophon died 1865 A.D."

"Ceasar was 144 years old."

"Franklin and Ceasar were Frenchmen."

"Napoleon was a Russian Czar."

"Napoleon was the first king of France."

"Napoleon fought at the battle of Bunker Hill."

"Xerxes was the son of Darius king of England," and

"Maria Antoinette was daughter of William the Conqueror and wife of Napoleon," though this last goes beyond the individual and attempts to settle three monarchs in one sentence.

It is evident that if Prof. Root is right, somebody or something must be wrong. Horace Walpole would consider that the subject itself was to blame. "Anything but history," he cried, "for history must be all false!" Yet so far as known he had never read on any scholar's examination paper what younger eyes have been privileged to see:

"The Phonecians are natives of Venice."



"The Spartans settled England."

"The Romans, after conquering England, taught the Brittons to make railroads."

"The commons chose aldermen, and the assembly opened at Versailles."

"1216 ships brought eleven settlers to new England."

"Wen the colonis turned their attention to tobacco they experiensed a strok of prosperity which nearly proved fatal to the destruction of the settlement."

"Valley Forge was one of the most bloodshed battles of the revolution killing the inhabitants."

"Flour and bacon were two provisions of the Ordinance of 1787."

Herbert Spencer does not assert the falsity of history, but goes farther, stating that it does not exist. "That which constitutes history proper so called is in great part omitted from works on the subject." It must be, then, because it is omitted that pupils so often fail to find it. Emerson agrees with Spencer. "There is properly no history. All public facts are to be individualized, all private facts are to be generalized. There is at the surface infinite variety of causes; at the center there is simplicity of cause. How many are the acts of one man in which we recognize the same character! All the facts of history preëxist in the mind as laws. The instinct of the mind, the purpose of

nature, betrays itself in the use we make of the signal narrations of history."

Who can gainsay this wisdom of our philosopher? But once admit it, and is not one equally compelled to admit the proposition laid down with emphasis by Prof. Bain, "There can be no systematic teaching of history in school years"? Froude, who has made the study of the subject the main occupation of his life says, "History is concerned as much as science with external facts. History depends upon exact knowledge; on the same minute, impartial, discriminating observation and analysis of particulars which is equally the basis of science. The business of the historian is not with immediate realities. History can be obtained only by scientific method." It needs but little thought to understand that the mental attitude necessary to the writer of human records is equally essential to the student of them.

See  
"You cannot learn everything," says one of England's wisest men. "The objects of knowledge have multiplied beyond the powers of the strongest mind to keep pace with them all. You must choose among them." As regards this special line of study, why would it not be true and comfortable economy to "skip" the long lists of all the names and all the dates of all the battles fought in all the wars of all the countries through all the ages, over all the earth? With them might go the names of all the commanders

in all these contests, and by great effort we might resign ourselves to sacrificing also the numerical statements of the killed and wounded on each side, particularly as the correct number is in every case as uncertain a matter as the location of the mausoleum of Moses. "It is a good thing to make an end of what might go on for ever," and to consider the mass of names, dates, and figures which will doubtless accrue in the next century, to be learned by millions yet unborn, is enough to give one intellectual cerebro-spinal meningitis on the spot.

A history lesson in an English training-school for teachers is thus described:

"'What event happened on September, 1066?'

"'Don't know, sir.'

"'This is serious, Mr. Jones. The very first date! How long did you devote to the two pages of dates which I set?'

"'About an hour, sir. I had a good deal of other work to do.'

"'An hour! An hour to the most important period of history! This is scandalous, outrageous!' Then a solemn entry was made, and Jones's doom was settled.

"Some poor souls labored for hours to learn a screed of dull balderdash which was without interest, sequence, or value. Some could reel off a list of half a thousand battles, giving the year when fought, the day of the month, the number killed, the names of the commanders on each side. But many lads suffered cruelly,

especially when they reached the Wars of the Roses and the battles in which William III. took part. The grand test ran something in this way: 'Write down what happened in 1086, 1088, 1001, 1113, 1139.' The students scribbled, then the teacher cried, 'Change papers!' He droned out the exact words of the miserable little book, and each man scored out the errors on the paper in front of him. To omit a semi-colon was culpable; to leave out a preposition was worse; to substitute a word for one of those used in the book was worse still; while to omit the day of the month on which somebody signed something or killed somebody else was regarded as next door to criminal. Each error cancelled the whole answer in which it occurred. Such tomfoolery as this went on for about three hours per week. Slow pupils worked till their heads were splitting and their lives were a misery, for they always feared lest some treacherous date should slide away at the most critical moment."

But the significance of the next paragraph!

"The man who conducted the silly torture was a sound historical student, and no one knew better than he did the exact lines which an intelligent teacher should follow. But he was cramped." (Have we any similar cases in this country?) "The precious departmental system crippled him, and he passed the best years of his life in starving the minds of some of the cleverest young men in England."

There is such a thing as "doing evil that good

may come," though few criminals can take refuge in that excuse. There are also some fortunate natures who are always "from seeming evil still educating good." Such was Hon. Andrew D. White, for some years President of Cornell University. The teaching in history which he received at Yale College, as "dreary, stale, flat, and unprofitable," according to all accounts, as the lessons above described, led him to revolt and originate a method of his own for which the world has much cause to thank him.

"To cram a lad's mind with mere names of places he never saw or will see," declares one of our most eminent scholars and historians, "with statements of facts which he cannot possibly understand and which must remain merely words to him,—this, in my opinion, is like loading his stomach with marbles. It is wonderful what a quantity of things of this kind a quick boy will commit to memory, how he will show off in examinations and delight the heart of his teacher."

"History," Froude says sorrowfully, "often seems to me like a child's box of letters with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purpose." Sometimes it seems as if the box of letters was shaken vigorously and the word was spelled by chance, producing crazy combinations like



"Aristotle was born 1384 B. C. in Syracuse, New York."

"Herodetus was a descendant of Herod the great and he was king of the Jews."

"Rome through the means of Sicily had her power increased and became as an empire more promiscuous."

"Columbus named the American Continent after Queen Isabella because she gave money for his early education."

"The Hundred Years War was characterized by several pitched events."

"The period of Charles II. was called the Resurrection."

"Charles Second was given to debauchery and other terrible sports."

"One of the principal causes of the Revolution was the Stand Back." Some minds, not enlightened by this statement, might have gone on for years laboring under the delusion that it was on account of an entirely different attitude.

"Fort sumpter was in janury and the president called for 15 men this was in baltimore"; yet according to Cicero, "History is the witness of the times, the torch of truth, the life of memory, the teacher of life, the messenger of antiquity."

That much of the study of History is a mere chewing of "words, words, words," seems pretty clearly attested by such statements as



"The cynics were a sort of swans kept by the Greek people."

"The Gladiators were the festivals celebrated in honor of the Romans."

"The Treaty of Utrecht was fought between the Zulus and the English."

It may be discouraging to realize the truth of Professor Bain's words, "The teaching of History almost appears to defy method," but our spirits rise instantly at the very next words: "The fact that it presents no difficulty to minds of ordinary education, and is, moreover, an interesting form of literature, is a sufficient reason for not spending much time upon it. The highest form of History is represented in the great works on the subject, ancient and modern. These are the self-chosen, private reading of our mature years."

No doubt the majority of teachers would be more than willing that the study should be pursued in that particular, personal, and private manner; then if the student concluded that

"Cleopatra was a man," or that,

"Cleopatra killed herself because she could not win the love of Cicero," or that

"Cleopatra was a very wicked woman who was persecuted by Antony and died of the bite of an asp or the prick of a poisonous needle and then found she had to go Rome in chains," no instructor need to lie awake nights trying to devise ways and means of giving children correct

ideas of the fascinating queen whose fate was settled by somebody in the declaration,

"Cleopatra was conquered by the Duke of Wellington," and who is thus passed down the ages : "Cleopatra was the first king of Egypt and Cleopatra's Needle was erected in his honor."

Nor would this private and interesting reading convey such information as this:

"Julius Cæsar conquered all the known world. He crossed the Rubicon to Alexandria. He made a conspiracy against Rome but was successful. At the senate they pulled their cloaks around him and he said What, Brutus thou too Casca? And in the year 27 B.C. in the 44th year of his reign and the seventy-sixth of his life he left a wife."

"Why in the French and Indian war it was difficult for Washington to fight against the British was because British was well armed while Washington's army was composed of all sorts of weapons of every denomination."

Not only Massachusetts, but Maine, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and California high schools are represented by these specimens of historical erudition. The horrible suspicion is forced upon us that there may be some truth in the statement that these advanced pupils, candidates for colleges, have entered the high schools without knowing How to Read ! Still another suspicion arises, that they do not know How to Spell,

judging from some productions which have the appearance of being written in a foreign tongue. How came these children in our high schools?

"Aristidees whose stern integrity was called aristidees the juste wrote on a Shell that a Citezen requested he would write his name on it and continued to call him the juste till he was tired of calling him so and his Sirname was received through the integrity of his Rivall who banished him ten years for his ostrasism."

"Learning without thought," says Confucius, "is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous." Truly there is much loss, though little peril of either thought or learning, in some of our schools.

"When the Fammin had killed every one in Rome Alarick went to Rome and said to them all the money there is in the world is here and you shall have the hole of it if you do not take Refug in the churches."

"The sarasens came to England with William the Conquor and found the sarasen Language they made all the People write there lawes in it and they brought the fudale system with them and rang it at every night at 12 oclock at night."

"The resurrection in Paris was headed by the Basteel and the royal Family was an ungovernable mob."

"Louis sixteen succeeded his granfather 20 years old. Turgot was made into finances and malsherbet into the minister of Interier."

"The convention divided Robespierre into two violent parties with Danton at the head of the other one and they executed a charge of tyranny."

"After all," writes a young essayist on the subject, "every one must reach there goal in History by the piercing of a subtule nature through the great abex of life," if anybody can find out what that is.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### "INTELLIGENCE FOR THE WORLD."

It is almost a pity that "when Sir Philip Sidney made writing fashionable everybody took to writing some intelligence for the literary world." It is almost a pity that so many took to writing before it was fashionable, if the children of to-day must learn all the writers' names, deeds and misdeeds; all the titles, plots, and characteristics of their works.

When Socrates gave the list of the things that Alcibiades had learned, it was a very short one. "I pretty accurately know what thou hast learned. Thou hast learned, then, thy letters, to play on the cithara, and to wrestle," and says Philip Gilbert Hamerton in his *Intellectual Life*, "Such an education was possible to an Athenian,

because a man situated as Alcibiades was situated in the intellectual history of the world had no past behind him which deserved his attention more than the present which surrounded him. What English parent would be content that his son should have the education of Alcibiades, or of Horace, or of Shakespeare! Yet although the burdens laid upon the memory have been steadily augmented, its powers have not increased. Our brains are not better constituted than those of our forefathers, although where they learned one thing we attempt to learn six."

One of these six—or sixteen, as the case may be, for our courses of study are "movable feasts,"—is English Literature; a mere trifle, to be sure, only the lives of a few hundred men and women with their writings in prose and poetry, in every possible style, and in every degree of excellence. Prof. Bain says, "It is the nature of science to be more or less dry, but Literature is nothing if not interesting," so young minds have that great advantage in this particular study,—it entertains as well as instructs. But his next words are not so encouraging: "We may admire Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, but they are not the one thing needful in an English class. Not one of these writers is child's play." But some children play with them, nevertheless, with varying results:

"Chaucer's satires are never overwhelmed by unkindness,"



"Chaucer tried to do good to his following beings."

"Chaucer's works add there little to Literature."

"His works Chaucer contains rare scraps of humour."

"A flow of sweet religion runs through all the writings written by Chaucer."

"Spencer's were distinguished by humorous and deep religious sentiments. His writings."

"Spenser was not happy when his wife and infant were burned to death in sight of the insurgents."

"He was not so very fond of Ireland though he lived in a very nice place where the queen sent him to."

"Spenser went back to England so he could die broken hearted of grief."

"Spenser was a policy sort of man though quite good."

"Shakespeare is the myraid headed Shakespeare he wrote a very good number of pieces."

"Shakespeare was a man very famous in his day, and left his bed to his wife."

"William Shakspear was a good writer. He was born on Stamford, and nobody knows anything about him."

"Shakespear's friends wrote on his grave that he'd be cursed if he moved his bones."

"Shakspear was buried in a graveyard and England has never dared to move him."



"Hamlet is a very good play in some points, but on the whole is rather melancholy."

"Julius Cæsar's play has not got the right name because its Brutus and Casius, who is the hero really," and it may be timely to note just here that "Brutus and Cassius were two dramatic poets."

"Othello was somewhat jealous of Iago and smothered his wife."

"Iago is the very person of hypocrisy."

"The Merchant of Venice only had a pound of flesh."

"Shylock had no mercy on any body who failed in business."

"Portia was a judge dressed up in a woman's clothes and old Shylock called her Daniel."

"Portia's recitation about mercy is considered one of Shakspeare's best prose compositions."

"King Lear died after he was out bareheaded in a very bad storm."

"Cornelia was the most becoming daughter of King Lear."

"Macbeth had some of his wife's ambition and set her up to kill the king."

"Macbeth did not really see a dagger but he saw one in his mind and clutched wildly at the handle."

"Macbeth was always very brave until he heard some one knock on a gate."

"He said if he had got to kill Duncan he'd like to do it as quick as possible so as to get it all off of his mind."

"Lady Macbeth was wife to Macbeth he was her husband."

"Lady Macbeth used to get out of bed some nights and go walking round to wash her hands."

"Lady Macbeth was a very tenderhearted woman who loved her husband and became very horrible and a monstrous."

"The Weird Sisters were Twin Sisters."

"The Weird Sisters were in caldrons and kept stirring them up."

"If one reads Shakeper's works he finds many several interesting and mysterious things in him."

"Miltons works are energetical and quite graceful."

"Milton was rather cross being blind."

"Milton advised everybody to get a Divorce."

"Milton was so handsome they thought he was a lady in christ college."

"Miltons paredise lost is quite a poem on the whole."

"Paradise Lost is the angels who fell down out of heaven pursued by satan who was also a angle."

"Milton wrote the Deserted Village or Hamlet."

Prof. Bain further says: "The teaching of English Literature is a mixture of what is easy, intelligible, and interesting to the young, with what is technical, abstruse, and accessible only

to the mature mind. There is no possibility of contriving a course that shall in every point keep the steady level of the juvenile capacity." Well, if that cannot be done, let us bring the juvenile capacity up to the steady level of Literature. What else are our schools for? Are we to be deterred by such trifles as technicalities and abstruseness? "The great fault in the early teaching is to address it to minds so little acquainted with literary qualities as not to comprehend the meaning of the terms employed." But does not education consist in making minds comprehend?

Says a prominent educator: "Literature is one of the very last things to be attempted. To appreciate it requires much education, often much experience of life, great familiarity with language, and often with social habits and customs." But he is vastly mistaken if he thinks we attempt it too early or without enough of this sort of familiarity. For instance:

"The Saxon Chronical was the seven deadly sins."

"The Saxon Cronicle was the union of seven Saxon kings."

"The Druids were poets who lived in stone pillars and huts."

"Bards were like hand organ men they went round singing to the people who lived in the country."

"The Knights of the Round Table went to the shrine of Bocacio."

"Old English Ballads did not last long because the tyranny and war which caused the people's minds to turn to love soon became simple and was not considered to instruct the people so it ceased."

"English Literature was very slow in coming to England. In the Elizabethan Age chimneys were introduced into houses and beds. Once houses had chimneys and a whole was left in the roof."

"Sir Philip Sidney was tutor to queen Elizabeth. His character was of the most unquestionable."

"Queen Elizabeth soon wearied on the death of Sydney and then soon died herself. The cause of her death being the execution of Sydney the thought of which she could not bear."

"Gray used to write his poems in a deserted graveyard and his elegy is one of the finest productions of the kind which stamp the school to which they belong."

"Smith was quite sarcastical and sneering in many of his pieces like Gulliver and the Tail of a Tub and Hudibras and many others of that style."

"Addison was a pretty writer. He was that is very genteel in his ways of writing."

"Bacon was not much of a humorous writer. He wrote some on government and how to take care of your garden."

"Cowper and Burns were marked for simi-

larity of style and they were both somewhat poor."

"Sir Thomas More called Martyr Moore was noted for being quite a martyr. He wrote about a place he went to that never existed only for very good people. They were no such a place."

"Moore has beautifully pictured in verse how Jeovah and his people escaped from Ferro by crossing a sea. He says thus sound the loud tymbal Jeovah has escaped from the army of Ferro by crossing the sea thus separating themselves from Ferro and his army by the sea ; both men and horses and chariots of Ferro went down. When the tempest sounded over the sea the people cryed Jeovah is free."

"The representative men of the 18th Century were Mrs. Shelley, Matthew Gregory Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe."

"Byron wrote Pilgrims Progres a prose theological article."

Yet we are told that this is the study to be last attempted ! Does our critic think that the schools exist only for the purpose of teaching children what they already know, or that we can wait until they are ready to receive what we can give them ? He forgets what an enormous load of learning we are obliged to pile upon them, and how short a time is allowed for the piling. Pope says that "half our knowledge we must snatch, not take," and was not Pope a wise man ?



Our critic further says, "The tree of knowledge is indeed vast in our schools, but it is after all but an overgrown weed. Good masters learn to hang many a garland on its unsightly knots by the way, and to bend many of its branches into unnatural but more or less useful directions." To the unprejudiced mind it might seem considerably less than more.

"It is now plain to the best educationists," says one who ranks high among them, "that our own literature must be the first to awaken literary interest and prepare the way for universal literature." But there is a considerable amount even of our own, and each day has a limited number of hours. Let us take,—say a dozen of our most famous writers. Let us add to each name the owner's date and place of birth, his principal characteristics, and the most important events of his life. Next, of course, we need an enumeration of the works of each writer—a dozen apiece will do, though three dozen would be a great deal better—with the plan or plot of each one, its particular qualities of style, and its moral, if it have one. These ingredients must be judiciously mixed, thoroughly stirred, and administered with a ladle, as the use of a teaspoon would waste altogether too much time. Thus shall our pupils be educated in American Literature.

"Longfellow was born in the about the 18 century. He wrote many works in prose and



some in poetry. His principal prosés are *Outer Mare* a French work and *Hyperion*."

"Longfellow is the greatest poet of America except Tennyson. He wrote odes to a Water fowl about birds. 'There is a Longfellow day in our school.'"

"He was a poet of the natural very sweet and simple and his lines are marked with great energy and breadth of scope. He wrote about an old clock on his stairs."

"Evangeline we see her in pictures. She was one of Longfellows and we greatly admire her calm and heroic manners."

"Irving's education unlike that of other great literary men was not expansive."

"When this country was a providence of Great Britain and Peter Stuyvesant was Governor of New Netherlands there was a certain personage by the name of Rip Van Winkle."

"Rip Van Winkle's wife had died from bursting a blood vessel at a peddler in a fit of passion."

"The only human being poor Rip Van Winkel knew when he got over his nap was his faithless dog who never deserted him."

"Irving was not quite so much of a poet as some other writers. All his work was prose and it was considered very funny even in our day. Irving is not living at present having died some time past."

"Byrant wrote for a newspaper a good deal

and he wrote some other things. He wrote Thanotopsis about death and became very famous suddenly and rather unexpected."

"Bryant wrote libery of poetry and song and I don't remember any of his other pieces except about violets."

"The death of the flowers was one of his most mornful poems. It is a sort of wail of sorrow."

"Hawthorne was a writer in the Salem custom house and then he wrote scarlet letter."

"Hawthorne was sort of stuck up and wrote mysteriously."

"Hawthorn wrote the story of seven fables and the breakfast table."

"Holmes is a rather witty sort of a writer. He wrote the wreck of the Hesperus and the Launching of the Ship."

"Prescott wrote Gibbons History of the Romans."

"Whittier has lived for many years in Cambridge. His most famous work begins Tear her tattered ensine down."

It is true, of course, that we ourselves have, through long years of reading and association, become as familiar with these names as with those of our own households, and it may be a trifle more difficult for these younger minds to retain such a mass of information, falling upon their devoted heads somewhat in the fashion of a snow-slide. But are they to be left in heathenish ignorance of the literary lights of the world,

especially of our own country and our own century ?

Much of the study of English Literature is as sound and satisfactory as Mr. Silas Wegg's reading of "The Decline and Fall Off The Rooshan Empire" to Mr. and Mrs. Boffin in the Bower,— "going straight across country at every thing that came before him ; taking all the hard words, biographical and geographical ; getting rather shaken by Hadrian, Trajan, and the Antonines ; stumbling at Polybius (pronounced Polly Beeious and supposed by Mr. Boffin to be a Roman virgin) heavily unseated by Titus Antoninus Pius ; up again and galloping smoothly with Augustus ; getting over the ground well with Commodus," and some pupils might say of their teachers as Boffin said of his reader, "Wegg takes it easy, but upon my soul these are scarers ! I didn't think this morning there were half so many scarers in print. But I'm in for it now !"

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### BRAINS WITHOUT BODIES.

"We were informed that our poor children were to be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. Now this school, gentlemen, teaches

them the contents of their own insides ! If the Author of the Universe had meant us to know what our livers are like, he would not have hidden them away in security. Gentlemen, this flying in the face of Providence must be scotched and even killed !"

It has taken a long time to convince human beings that it is wise to know something about "the contents of their own insides." Even now there are many skeptics, and, even among those who profess to be converted, the change of heart is more theoretical than practical. "People are beginning to see that the first requisite to success in life is to be a good animal," says Herbert Spencer. It is fortunate that they have made even a beginning. The clearer vision will no doubt follow in due time.

Aristotle laid down the injunction, "Since the body of men comes under our care before the mind, it should be attended to before it." He considered a commonwealth essentially defective if gymnastics were not an integral part of its code. Plato called him a cripple who cultivated only his mind ; he wanted the years from seventeen to twenty devoted to athletics. Juvenal declared, "Our prayers should be for a sound mind in a healthy body." In the words of Montaigne, "'Tis not a soul, 'tis not a body that we are training up, but a man, and we ought not to divide him," and Rousseau, "You are teaching science ; very good. I am dealing with the

instrument by which science is acquired. All who have reflected upon the mode of life among the ancients, attribute to gymnastic exercises that vigor of body and mind which so notably distinguished them from us moderns. Care of the body is the wisest lesson children are ever taught, but the one that is, and always will be, the most neglected."

Yet many of our courses of study require instruction in Physiology, and some of our pupils know a great deal about it. For instance :

"The brain is the seat of conciseness."

"What should we do without a brane a brane is a very nice thing to have."

"We know in our brain when we cut our finger and if we did not have one we could not feel the pain and it would be very bad for us."

The brain is a bony cage. It has most work to do of anything."

"The brain is like the telegraph office, and the nerves are the wars which goes from the brain all around your body."

"The biggest globe in the body is called your brain. The head is in the skull and the skull is the brain which protects it."

"If the brain is hurt in any way all your body kinder kinks up and you have fits or convulsives or something and then one of these days you will die."

Here, truly is "much throwing about of brains," as Guildenstern declared.



Herbert Spencer also says, "Men who would resent as an insult any imputation of ignorance respecting the fabled labors of a fabled demi-god, show not the slightest shame in confessing that they do not know what are the actions of the spinal cord, what is the normal rate of pulsation, or how the lungs are inflated." But their children know :

“The spinal column is made up of little bones and it extends from the head to the heels.”

“The spine is triangular and situated in the nervous system.”

“The spinal cavity is a cord which is the spleen,” and “The spleen is apart of the liver which is attached to the spine.”

This is something like what the prophet Ezekiel saw in his vision, “As if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.” Concerning “the rate of pulsation,” ignorance of which our philosopher deplors;

“Our puls is in there risting and it goes 60 times a minute.”

“The pulse beats for the artery,”—evidently a sort of vicarious operation.

“Whenever an artery is exposed the pulse can be felt.”

“The elasticities of the arteries is a share in the circulation of the blood.”

“The pulsation of the arteries is a movement of the heart and throws the blood into muscular contraction.”



"A man's pulse goes a great deal quicker than you can count. It is in your fingers when you feel it."

And "the inflation of the lungs,"—why, that is a subject with which they are perfectly familiar :

"Breathing is something we can not do without. It is something we have to do all our life."

"Breathing is a substance which we can not see. We may hear it in many cases."

"If we were to live without breathing we could not do it. It is one of the most important things we have to depend on."

"If we could not breathe we should not be able to live, so therefore we are taught to breathe so that there might be somebody living."

Thus indirectly are our schools preserving the human race—if the children are really "taught to breathe." But how extensive and how profitable is the teaching? Like all other instruction it is likely to be a little obscure to the child if accompanied by technicalities, as in the case of

"The diapfram is our breath and we only breathe when we read."

Still our English scientist is not satisfied : "While anxious that their sons should be well up in the superstructures of two thousand years ago, they care not that they should be taught anything about the structure and functions of their own bodies ; nay, would even disapprove of such instruction."

But in spite of the parents' indifference or op-

position, their children do somehow manage to accumulate a vast amount of ignorance about the functions of their bodies :

"A tendon ties the muscles to all the bones."

"Tendon is effected either by muscular tissue or by means of white firm masses of glistening known as fibrous tissue."

"Ligaments is a kind of elements in which they used to join one joint to another when they are broken. They are used to connect bands or cords."

"The auditorium nerves has no special sense. It has sonorous vibrations."

"Triceps muscular restore to bent part to a straight condition those of the back, the arm. Abductor muscular are those which moved the part from the axis of the body."

"Digestion is brought on by the lungs having something the matter with them."

"Bronchitis is the organ of the body which warns the lungs of the presence of bad air."

"The liver is absorbed in the blood and we can feel it on the open right hand of the body."

"The facial nerves are perforated by a long and torturing canal and comes from an opening in the ear."

"Transfusion of blood is killing one man to get it into the other."

It was Josh Billings who said, "It is better not to know so many things than to know so many things that aint so."

Is it possible to find a greater fallacy in our whole educational scheme than that the lack of time prevents proper attention to the physical welfare of pupils? Yet the plea is almost universal, as is the neglect for which it forms the excuse. As well might a farmer assert that his desire for fine crops was a reason for neglecting the weeding and watering of his fields.

Sir John Lubbock complains that in England "out of four and one-half million children less than twenty-five thousand were examined last year in any branch of science as a special study. Only fourteen thousand studied the laws of health and animal physiology." But what of that? Probably most of the four and one-half million could reduce frightful common fractions to utterly useless decimal ones; tell all about some geographical locality nobody outside of the school-room ever heard of or wanted to know about, or parse an adverbial phrase expressing some metaphysical truth entirely beyond the comprehension of the parser.

"The question of teaching anatomy and physiology in our public schools," declares Dr. Austin Flint of New York, "is one which hardly admits of discussion, provided these subjects can be taught effectively. It is an error to imagine that they are necessarily encumbered with technical names and expressions," or that the teaching need result in technicalities run mad, as,

"The tinpanum is the external ear compli-

cated by appearances of moving bones and oval shaped vestibule membranes."

It is probable that as long as men have bodies they will also have stomachs, and very likely that as long as they have stomachs they will occasionally feel the need of something to fill them. Hunger is a third certainty which can be safely classed with the other two, proverbially "the only sure things on earth,—death and taxes."

"We cook our food because their of five ways of cooking potatoes. We should die if we ate our food raw," and we might roar if we had to.

"The function of food is to do its proper work in the body. Its proper work is to well masticate the food and it goes through without dropping instead of being pushed through by the skin."

"Food is digested by the action of the lungs. The food passes through your windpipe to the pores and then passes of your body by evaporation."

"Food is digested when we put it into our mouths our teeth chews it and our tongue rolls it down our body."

"Food is something very good for us to take bone giving and heatmaking food and if we did not absorb our food we would have no stomach or degestion of the Liver and the blood corpuscles would shiver and we would be not much good to nobody if we did not ate."

The great mass of men have already outgrown their love for raw food, and cooking has become one of the most important of our arts, while a first-class cook commands a larger salary than the president of a college. This is in accordance with the eternal fitness of things, if the proverb is true, "No dinner, no man." What are all the railroads laid and bridges built and Atlantic cables swung from shore to shore; what are all the songs sung, sermons preached, and books written, but the embodiment of bread,—the apotheosis of beef and potato? "With Stupidity and sound Digestion, man may front much," says poor dyspeptic Carlyle, "but what in these dull, unimaginative days are the terrors of Conscience to the diseases of the Liver? Not on Morality, but on Cookery, let us build our strongholds." But as a man's very morality is often the mere effect, of which cooking is the first great cause, why are we reversing any natural order in caring for the stomach before we trouble ourselves about the condition of the soul! Voltaire declared that the fate of many a nation has depended upon the good or bad digestion of its ministers, and we discover the fact for ourselves if we read history to any purpose. But we need not necessarily turn to history for proofs that we are what our food makes us; that the kind of dinner determines the kind of man. O Cooks of the world, for how much meanness, mischief, and misery are



some of you responsible ; how much strength of soul and body, how much courage, patience, ambition, inspiration is due to others of your number! With all our fine notions and æsthetic theories, it is less the intellectual laws of calculus than the physical laws of the kitchen that work for the woe or the welfare of the world.

Maine Liquor Laws, Prohibition, and High License do not appear to have made any tremendous progress in checking the ruin wrought by rum ; nor can much improvement be expected from the new requirement of temperance training, if, as is absolutely the case in certain schools where this is required by law, teachers are forbidden to use the word rum, or to utter one syllable outside the text-book in denunciation of drunkenness. In the words of one of these instructors, "I teach 'the effect of alcohol on the tissues.' The children don't recognize alcohol when they see it, smell it, or taste it ; it has a different name in their homes and in the corner grog-shop, and they have no more idea that such instruction has any relation to their drunken fathers and mothers and their degraded homes, than they have about protoplasm and primeval man."

These are the children who are able to tell you all about alcohol:

"Alcohol is a licked poisson."

"Alcohol is a liquid poisoun."

"Alcohol makes the mussels grow fat."

"We should never drink alkihol because it bloats out our body."

"When we drink alchihol and other things it makes the legs kind of twinkly."

"We must never eat alcoholl because then it eats our fissures and we become very diseased."

"Alcohaul will turn the skin all black and it cleans it if you rub it hard and dont take none in the inside of you."

But perhaps even this is better than nothing, and it is to be hoped that training in temperance does, in some schools, produce better results. How can this distressing social problem be settled save through education?

"The saloon must go," says the plain-speaking *School Journal*, "and teachers should say so. But some say the saloon is not arithmetic, grammar, history, or geography; what business has it in the school-room? It is just the place of all places where it ought to be discussed. If the men of to-day demand its life, we must train up the man and woman of to-morrow to demand its death. The school-room is the center of a mighty power that should be used for the regeneration of the world."

"There is no side of the intellect," says Prof. Huxley, "which the study of Physiology does not call into play; no region of human knowledge into which either its roots or its branches do not extend; like the Atlantic between the Old and New Worlds, its waves wash the two worlds of

matter and of mind." Neglect of this study causes, according to Charles Kingsley, an almost endless list of evils. "The very morals will suffer. From ill-filled lungs, which signify ill-repaired blood, arise year by year an amount not merely of disease, but of folly, temper, laziness, intemperance, madness, and crime, the sum of which will never be known till that great day when men shall be called to account for all deeds done in the body. We must teach men that they are the arbiters of their own destinies and, to a fearfully great degree, of their children's destinies after them. We must do it by teaching them sound practical science, the science of physiology as applied to health. So and so only can we check the power of degradation which I believe to be surely going on, not merely in these islands, but in every civilized community in the world in proportion to its civilization. Teaching of this kind ought to, and will, in some more civilized age and country, be held a necessary element in the school course of every child."

"Perhaps," says Herbert Spencer, "nothing will so hasten the time when body and mind will both be adequately cared for as the belief that the preservation of health is a duty. Few seem conscious that there is such a thing as physical morality."

## CHAPTER IX.

### HANDS AND HEADS.

"It is an easy thing to be a philosopher, but it is hard to make it pay," says the *Journal of Education*, recognizing the truth of the words of Novalis, "Philosophy will bake no bread." Neither will it earn the money to buy the fuel to feed the fire by which the bread is baked.

The majority of the graduates of our public schools stand helplessly, with bewildered eyes and puzzled brains, upon the threshold of the world's great workshop, asking piteously the question, "Now, what shall I do to earn my living?" and echo immediately and sorrowfully answers, "I'm sure I haven't the least idea."

Truly, the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment, but no matter how much we may affect to despise this tenement of clay and its material requirements, it must be clothed, warmed, and nourished, if it is to retain its spiritual and immortal guest to whom we accord glory and honor. Bread and boots and blankets must be bought, and bought with money which must first be earned, and "it is always the material shoe which gives the hardest pinch."

Whether or not life is worth living, is a question which admits of discussion, and one which must be settled by individual opinion. But

given existence, desirable or otherwise, it needs no argument to prove that there are but three ways of sustaining it—by working, begging, or stealing.

Fifty years ago in the House of Commons, a member of that legislative body rose excitedly with these words upon his lips: "And pray, what do you propose to rear your youth for? Why, cotton-spinners and pin-makers, or, if you like, blacksmiths and mere day-laborers. These are the men whom you are to teach foreign languages, mathematics, and the notation of music! Was there ever anything more absurd? It really seems as if God hath withdrawn all common sense from this house!"

Dr. J. H. Vincent of Chautauqua follows the indignant Englishman half a century later with the words, "If I want my boy to become a blacksmith I would let him go through college. No man has a right to be merely a blacksmith. He must be a man and a citizen."

Says Ascot R. Hope, one of Great Britain's most prominent educators, "If you train your boy to be a grocer and nothing else, and if he turn out a bad grocer, he can not so easily take to any other business for which he may seem more fit; but the really educated man is more likely to be at home in any occupation."

One of the most far-sighted and progressive principals in the third city of the Union declares, "This movement for industrial education



is right ; it commends itself to the common sense of thinking men ; it will grandly succeed ; it should find its warmest supporters among those who know best the deficiencies of our present system—the teachers. The days of fetichism of books and of mere scholasticism are past. It is coming to be recognized that the man who can build the house, the engine, the factory ; who can weave the fabric of silk, or cotton, or wool ; who can fashion iron and steel into a thousand forms of use, is higher than the man who merely keeps the books, or chronicles the achievements of the hand-workers. In the days of general ignorance and superstition, when the ability to read and write made one eminent among his fellows, the relatively learned, too frequently by playing upon the fears of the ignorant, acquired an ascendancy over them. This state of things is passing away. The light of truth is spreading ; its intense brightness will soon irradiate every question of life ; wrongs hoary with age shall be righted ; labor will have its coronation ; let us hasten the day."

Dr. G. Von Taube, of the Gramercy Park Training School, speaks as one having authority ; "There is but little morality in misery, and if our civilization must condemn a vast number of our population to a lot very akin to slavery, then, indeed, it is a failure. Our equality is a bitter irony if no chance is given to our young men to do their best in life. Knowledge is the requirement

for it, and practical knowledge, too, as demanded in our times, and such we are in duty bound to give, if our democratic traditions are to be kept."

John Morley had a word to say on this subject in his address delivered not long ago before the London Society for the Extension of Universal Teaching: "The end of education is to make a man, and not a cyclopedia; a citizen, and not a book of elegant extracts. Manual training is of use as an aid to intellectual activity as a harness in which to break the coltish mind to apply theory in practice. The industrial pre-eminence of England is at stake unless scientific, commercial, and technical education is pushed on with vigor."

Prof. C. M. Woodward, Director of the Manual Training School of St. Louis, endorses the idea: "Do not forget that the pupil has hands as well as eyes and ears. The general introduction into our public schools of systematic training in the underlying principles of the handicrafts, is the next great step in the development of our educational system. Its future is, I believe, firmly bound up in and dependent upon the future of manual training."

In an address before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in August, 1877, Prof. James of the University of Pennsylvania uttered these significant words: "Yoke intelligence and reflection to the homely cart of manual labor, and the interest of intelligent and

reflecting boys will be arrested and permanently fixed. Along this line we must look for a gradual elevation in the social tone of our workmen. It will assist powerfully in developing intelligence and industrial ability which now lies dormant in thousands of our children. An Edison, a Roebing, a Whitney, a Morse might go through the whole curriculum of some of our best schools and find absolutely nothing to stir his powers. He might, and probably would be, ranked as a dullard."

One is reminded of an illustration of Henry Ward Beecher's: "Men are often like knives with many blades. They know how to open one and only one. The rest are buried in the handle, and they are no better than they would have been if they had been made with but one blade."

Dr. Parkhurst declares, "Industrial ignorance is the mother of idleness, the grandmother of destitution, the great-grandmother of socialism and nihilistic discontent. So far as the battle of life is concerned, to train children's ideas without training their fingers, is like putting a regiment through musket drill; it is healthy discipline and affords pleasant dress parade, but will avail little before the enemy, unless with all their other acquirements they have learned to shoot."

In the *Century* for November, Col. Richard T. Auchmuty writes: "The workmen of the future must learn how to work before they seek

employment. All professional men do this. What scientific schools are to the engineer and architect, what the law school and the medical college are to the lawyer and the physician, or what the business college is to the clerk, trade schools must be to the future mechanics." This is merely a recognition of the fact that, the apprentice system having died out, something practical must be found to supply its place and to accomplish the same results. We are called upon to adapt our schools to a new order of things.

Sir John Lubbock groans: "A thousand hours in the most precious seed-time of life of millions of children spent in learning that *i* must follow *e* in *conceive*, and precede it in *believe*; that two *e*'s must, no one knows why, come together in *proceed* and *exceed*, and be separated in *precede* and *accede*; that *uncle* must be spelled with a *c*, but ankle with a *k*,—while lessons in health and thrift, sewing and cooking, which should make the life of the poor tolerable, and elementary singing and drawing which should make it pleasant, and push out lower and degrading amusements, are in many cases almost vainly trying to gain admission."

One of our most progressive teachers is responsible for this utterance: "The State carries on the work of instruction as a matter of policy and economy. The results which follow the vast expenditures are far from satisfactory."

best just as  
professional  
schools, the  
youth,  
maturity,  
trade  
training

Observant men see that there is something wrong. They see that the children leave the schools with an abundance of useless lore"—(and he might have added that they do not retain even that very long), "but with a plentiful lack of useful knowledge." Is not this a self-evident truth?

Says another of equal eminence: "Ever since the time that illustrious American snatched the lightning from the clouds and made it obedient to his behests, there has arisen a multitude of discoverers and inventors who have made this country and this age the most noted in the annals of history. In this intensely practical age, what modifications have taken place in the course of study in our common schools? We are still pulling to pieces the beautiful sentences of Milton and Shakespeare, forgetting that the building up process is of infinitely more value to the student than the pulling down of any structure. We still spend too much time in spelling words, the meaning of which children do not know. Industrial education does not aim at making mechanics of all the boys, nor seamstresses and cooks of all the girls. The boy or girl who has the opportunity for applying the principles which belong to industrial education will not only learn that which will be useful during life, but will acquire will-power over muscle that will quicken the intellect."

These are the plain words of an instructor of long experience. "What shall we say to these things?"



Still another of almost equal experience adds his testimony :

"Industrial education will cause fewer mistakes to be made in the choice of vocations. The number of briefless barristers will be greatly reduced ; fewer disciples of Esculapius will deal drugs and death around the tomb. There will be a reduction in the ranks of those who pound rather than expound sacred texts. All this will be a gain and a glory to the State."

Says Col. Francis W. Parker, "Manual labor is the foundation of clear thinking, sound imagination, and good health. If you would develop morality in a child, train him to work." And Sir Philip Magnus, "To assume that the best education can be given through the medium of books only, is a survival of the medievalism against which nearly all educational authorities protest."

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia College, President of the New York Industrial Association, is one of our most cultured and clear-seeing educators. In an address before the National Education Association at Washington, February, 1888, he said, among other pertinent things : "This subject is too important and too pressing to permit us to spend time in wandering off to fight duels with windmills. Manual training cannot be treated as an annex or appendix to the traditional course of study. It does not claim admittance as a

favor, it demands it as a right. The future course of study will not be a Procrustean structure, absolutely and unqualifiedly alike for all localities and for all schools, but it will have in it a principle, and that principle will be founded on a scientific basis; the highest duty of the educator will be its application to his own particular needs and demands."

Teachers find that to many children nothing proves more discouraging than failure to realize that their school-work counts for something. All knowledge must be a sort of abstract and intangible possession to the child, unless he can in some way make practical application of it. The constant writing of figures and sentences which are as constantly rubbed out again, gives the child a depressing sense of doing a vast amount of work with nothing in the world to show for it.

"Is your object to fit pupils for certain trades?" asked a reporter of Prof. Leipziger, of the Hebrew Technical Institute, New York. "Our object is to *educate*," was the emphatic answer. "Hand-work cultivates observation, judgment, and a taste for exactness which has a final result in morality. If a boy parses a sentence incorrectly he forgets all his mistakes in a few minutes, but if he makes an error in wood-carving it annoys him every time he looks at it. If he likes mechanics, he must necessarily learn mathematics and science.

Even if one clings to the old idea that education is the gaining of knowledge, the industrial method is the best. Instead of trying to give a boy an idea of a cube by an elaborate definition set him to draw one or make one out of paper, and he'll know forevermore just what a cube is." Is there any terrible heresy in such doctrine as this? "Nine-tenths of the work done in this world is hand-work, but all of our effort in education so far has been to teach people to live without working with their hands." Oh, tremendous and thrilling truth, to which so many of our lamentable social conditions bear abundant and heartbreaking testimony!

In his address before the Industrial Education Association of New York, Gen. Francis A. Walker enunciated these stirring truths: "The introduction of shop work into the public system of education cannot fail to have a most beneficial influence in promoting a respect for labor, and in overcoming the false and pernicious passion of our young people for crowding themselves into overdone and underpaid departments where they may escape manual exertion. Helplessness and thriftlessness recruit the ranks of the vicious and depraved, and mock the efforts of both philanthropy and criminal law to suppress them. What may education do toward removing these twin evils of society, the source of poverty, degradation, and crime? Is there hope through the schools?" And we find ourselves

face to face with the solemn fact that if there is no hope in our schools there is no hope anywhere.

This scorn of labor is one of the greatest evils of our day. We are coming by degrees, however, to feel considerable respect for work, and even in some slight degree, for work done with the hands and in the sweat of the face. The beneficial and magnificent results which have been developed in nearly all the mechanical arts have compelled us in many cases to do homage to the skilled workman, though he is working for day's wages. Still we are a long way from that measure of respect and appreciation which should be accorded to all honest industry. We are not yet entirely beyond resentment at Lincoln's answer to the question of the astonished foreigner, "Do you black your own boots?" "Why, yes, whose boots should I black?" nor do we wonder at the foreigner's surprise. It has taken many years for us to reach a practical belief in the doctrine of equality taught by Robert Burns, so delightedly accepted in poetry, so reluctantly applied to life.

The future salvation of this country is wrapped up in the successful solution of many great problems, not one of which is more important than that of the dignity, the value, the rights of labor. "Labor is coming to the front," says Powderly, "and the man in the paper cap must take his place in the profession"; unless we

graciously make an entrance for him, he will force one for himself, perhaps by methods of which we cannot quite approve. The helpless housekeepers of the country can best tell what dangers threaten our national home life. For the simplest domestic service they must depend upon a horde of ignorant foreign servants, while our American girls, educated in our public schools, starve slowly in daily factories and nightly garrets. The false education of each class reacts on the other to the immense injury of both, giving to the student of social economy a problem for which there can be found no easy solution. Yet solved it must be, and in some practical fashion, if our country's future welfare is to be in any manner dependent upon its social and domestic life.

What is the reason for the existence of so many trade schools, art schools, cooking schools, and business colleges all over the country, if it is not because of the failure of the common schools to prepare our young men and women for the practical work of life waiting to be done, and which they are obliged to do in self-defense? No one denies the need of thorough education for the brain; but the head can not truly say to the hand, "I have no need of thee."

"I advise all parents to have their boys and girls taught short-hand writing and type-writing," said Charles Reade. "A short-hand writer who can type-write his notes will be safer from poverty



than a great Greek scholar." But even he would not have said that a man would run his Remington any less successfully for being able to read Aristophanes in the original.

But the question is reasonably asked, How, in the already over-crowded condition of the course of study, can time be found for the proposed additional work? If, as a Brooklyn principal asserts, "In no work to-day is there so much quackery as in the so-called educational work of the schools, public and private alike," then surely the matter resolves itself into a simple getting rid of the quackery in order to adopt something genuine and profitable in its place. This will certainly prove a lightening of the load instead of an addition to it.

Professor Thomas Davidson is explicit in his method for securing the necessary time. "Let us do away with what is nonsensical and hurtful in our present courses, and plenty of time will be left for all the manual training that is desirable. Do away, for example, with a great deal of the arithmetic, a great deal of the formal grammar, the whole of the elocutionary reading, that are now taught. Above all, do away with the whole wicked system of school exhibitions, which not only waste valuable time, but teach so many evil lessons of vanity, envy, selfishness, and whose cheap, vulgar applause so tends to unfit young people for the sober, unapplauded duties of real life."

"There is nothing so terrible," says Goethe, "as activity without insight." If there were nothing but theory on which to base these claims for a change in our school system, then indeed we might hesitate before making any attempts at change. But these theories have been practically applied and tested in numerous places where experiments could be safely made. The result in every case has been successful.

H. W. Compton writes from the Training School of Toledo, Ohio: "Boys and girls pass from their algebra and history to their drawing, and from these again to their geometry and literature with a hearty zest for all. All the pupils show the greatest interest and enthusiasm in the work. The boys do not want any better holiday than to work in the shops. The opposition to manual training rises largely from the lamentable ignorance which prevails concerning its aims and results. It dignifies and exalts labor, and teaches respect for the laboring man. It teaches no special trade, and yet lays the foundation for any trade and gives the youth such knowledge and skill that he becomes a better and sounder judge of men and things in whatever business or profession he may engage." So is the tree known by its fruits, and we recognize with Whittier that—

"On the ladder of God which upward leads  
The steps of progress are human needs."

## CHAPTER X.

### "SENATORS SWEAR."

"IF ever a country was in danger of dying of dyspepsia, ours is," says Dr. Parkhurst. "An adult foreigner is not easily masticated, salivated, and digested. Our hopes must center in the children. The school is the national stomach. Our public schools must be the nurseries of young patriots; they are our best Americanizing machinery."

Says George Stuart, of the Philadelphia High School: "The efficiency of the American public school in training for citizenship, is likely to be severely tested in the near future. Recently there has appeared in our midst an element peculiarly alien in race and sympathies, or revolutionary in tendencies, and in numbers sufficiently large to disturb the calm future of our social forms and the settled traditions of centuries. Against the subversive influence of this element our common school is a tower of strength, and civics, as a branch of instruction, assumes paramount importance."

"What is in store for the children of to-day's voters?" inquires Frances C. Sparhawk in *Education*. "We have thrown open our doors to the world; the world has come; what are we going to do with it? New elements of danger are to

be met; we have formerly had to Americanize individuals; now we must Americanize organizations."

"Republics," says Senator Stewart of Nevada, "have seldom perished by the sword. They have always bred a race of warriors, willing and capable of vanquishing every foe except ignorance among the masses. By that fatal enemy all the republics of ancient times were destroyed. The masses became incapable of conducting the complicated machinery of government necessary in a republic." If ignorance can kill our republic as it did those of the past, there is surely something to fear in certain facts set forth by Rev. Joseph Cook: "Of the ten million actual voters in the United States, two million cannot write their names. There are at least two million voters who are not classified as illiterates, and yet do not know enough to cast an intelligent vote. The whiskey rings own more property than the slave-holders ever did. It is what I call the grip of ruin on the throat of this nation. Unloose it! Deliver America from the bondage of ignorance. That should be the supreme watchword of the hour."

Lord Bacon declared, "There is no greater work for any man than the founding of states." But how about the work of preserving and improving those already founded?

"A thousand years scarce serves to form a state,  
An hour may lay it in the dust."

Sydney Smith has said, "It would seem that the science of government is an unappropriated region in the university of knowledge," but Sydney Smith lived years before we were given an explanation of the fact :

"The science of government is so very great of a strane on the mind that the mind of a man is not culpable of concieving and carrying out a science of government."

Still the young minds have some ideas concerning the chief executive and a certain legislative body.

"The President is settled by a tretim."

"When the President is tired the chief justice shall preside."

"The president heads all the armys and navys of the United States and makes them move round."

"Congress can raise money by appropriating it."

"Congress shall borrow and spend all the money of the people."

"Congress has no power over any Indian tribes now living."

"Congress can commit pirates to the high seas."

"Congress has power to determine what crimes shall be committed."

"The duration of the Session of Congress depends upon when the President takes his pleasure and two houses cannot agree."



"There must be three reading lessons in Congress on a Bill before it finally passes away."

"Treason is defied by the Constitution and punished by Congress."

To fire off crackers on the Fourth of July—and fire a few houses at the same time; to float a flag from the front window on the twenty-second of February, and hurrah for the regiment that marches through the city on Decoration Day,—have not the American people plenty of patriotism and public spirit, with speeches, conflagrations, explosions, and congratulations, all along the line?

The average respectable American citizen believes theoretically in a republican form of government, and if it were threatened would instantly cry, "The Union must and shall be preserved!" But how does he prove his devotion? Doubtless, like Artemus Ward, he would willingly sacrifice all his wife's relations if danger threatened his beloved country; but in many cases he will not take the trouble even to cast a ballot which might help to avert all danger.

Plato says that the punishment which the wise man suffers who refuses to take part in the government is, to live under the government of worse men. But did any wise man ever so refuse, or, refusing, did he not fairly forfeit the claim to be called wise?

What will be the outcome—what is it already—of this "masterly inactivity" on the part of re-

sponsible citizens? *Vide* the official corruption of a body of public servants in the largest city in the Union, exposed, as is a hole in the ground when the covering stone is displaced, and revealing the crawling creatures within it trying to escape in every direction (scurrying to Canada, to England, to the grave, while a few of them accidentally find their way into State prisons); the capitol of the Empire State, erected a few years ago at a cost of seventeen millions of dollars, daily threatening to tumble down on the heads of the astute legislators, and, in the educational world, the College of the City of New York, which graduates the enormous number of forty students a year at the slight cost of one hundred and forty thousand dollars, repaired in 1886, and just one year later found to be in need of further repairs to the extent of one hundred and fifty-six thousand dollars. But why name instances of official iniquity in order to prove its universal existence? There is no need to demonstrate that water runs downhill. There is not an intelligent boy twelve years old in any intelligent family in the country who does not understand, in a general way, at least, the sore straits into which the country has been drifting.

"In that elder day

To be a Roman was greater than a king."

and there was a time when to be a native of this  
"land of the free and the home of the brave"  
was not much less of a distinction. But now?

" 'Mamma, Mary says her father is an Irish-American, and she's awfully stuck up about it.'

" 'Well?'

" 'And Gretchen says her father is a German-American, and she's awfully stuck up too.'

" 'Yes.'

" 'And Marie is bragging because her father is a French- American.'

" 'I can't help it, dear.'

" 'But isn't there something I can brag of?'

" 'No, pet ; you are only an American.'"

Considerable instruction in Civil Government is already given in our schools, this particular tree of knowledge occasionally bearing most astonishing fruit:

" 'We have not had any good government since the declaration of independence.'

" 'The Revolutionary War was begun in 1775, and has continued all this time.'

" 'No free government can exist unless its powers are discharged on earth.'

" 'When territory is found uninhabited by new settlements, you take the laws of the country'; but not a word of explanation is offered as to what you are expected to do with them.

" 'The Federal government grew out of several States. It has three states. Legislature, executive, and judicial.'

" 'The Constitution should be the law of the country and be violated.'

" 'No soldier shall be quartered anywhere in

the United States without the consent of the owner."

"No person shall be convicted of treason unless he has done it to two witnesses in open court."

"The president cannot draw any salary during any term of office."

"Electors are chosen by people."

"Electors meet to cast their votes at each place in the State that is the capital of the legislature."

But the "qualifications to be a president" are still more surprising :

"The constitution is 35 years, he shall be a natural born citizen of the United States, he shall have been president of the United States fourteen years prior to taking a seat."

"An absolute monarch makes the caprice of his own will but a democrat government is when the democrats are a select body of men and there elected by the people and use their voices in making the laws."

"In nearly all the states judicial officers should be impeached." Perhaps in the words of Capt. Cuttle, "The bearing of this obseruation lies in the application of it."

"The House of Representatives shall have sole power of impeaching a speaker."

"On taking their seats Senators and Representatives swear."

"No person shall be a Senator who has not

attained the age of 9 years and been a resident of the country 30 years."

"If the President dies the Vice President has got to devolve his duties," and

"The Vice President shall be President of the Senate and be equally divided," after which operation it is possible, to quote Sam Weller, "His most formiliar friends voodn't know him."

This sort of instruction probably does no harm, though it reminds one of the remark made by the blacksmith who unresistingly bore the chastisement inflicted by his wife, "It don't hurt me none, and it does her a heap o' good." Somebody, no doubt, feels more comfortable to know that political education is not entirely neglected by the system ; but well as it may be attended to, is there not a better way still,—the preaching of a living gospel instead of the repetition of dead words? Character, honesty, moral principle, recognition of duty, a sense of responsibility, all the qualities of manhood most needed in our electors, senators, and public officers,—why is not the development of an appreciation for these things quite as profitable as definitions and technicalities, which to the children learning them are again nothing but "words, words, words"? There is great danger ahead if there is truth in this eloquent disquisition of a young writer on the subject of our national life :

"And to-day we sail beneath the clear sky of concord hurled the crators upon a creasted wave



of life without a compass or rudder for whenever the pillars which support a national edifice of its massive columns are undermined and prostrated the whole fabric of national freedom will be crushed in ruin."

One hope only is held out to us; "The United States shall not be put into slavery or subject to its jurisdiction."

It was Garfield who said, "Our national safety demands that the fountains of political power shall be made pure by intelligence and kept pure by vigilance." Evidently there is something to be done, and there must be found some way of doing it if the Republic upon which we pride ourselves is to remain a thing to be proud of. This fact is forced upon us in many ways, but most painfully of all in the statement made by a young student of political economy: "So reckless has our Legislator become that our political institutions will soon be all crumbs."

"Many people," writes a wise student of political economy, "are not conscious of receiving benefits from the existence of government. In orderly communities the influence of government is like that of the atmosphere, all embracing, but silent. This in part explains the smuggling and tax dodging by respectable people. In this popular ignorance lies the necessity for school instruction. All teaching of civics must found itself upon the necessity of government and the essential beneficence of its operations."

Says Prof. Charles D. Marx of Cornell University, "For the great questions of national life staring us in the face to-day, we find no answers in antiquity. Compulsory education, care of commerce and industry, agriculture and internal communication, colonial and social politics—these are definitions and problems which have sprouted in the soil of modern times."

"What then," asks Thomas P. Ballard of Ohio, "is to be the permanent and practical relation of our common schools to the civil service of the future? It is plain that the function of the teacher in the eye of the State must be directed to laying the foundations for citizenship, a training broad enough to include the physique, the intellect, the entire character of the people. The momentous question is how to train the American citizen for the great duties and probabilities of the future. The State, through the schools, must do its utmost. The entire work of education must converge to this great end. Civil service reform should pre-eminently command the support of our school men."

In the words of Prof. Hewitt of Cornell University, "When the system of our public service shall be perfected so that the people demand special fitness in their public servants, we shall see public employment an honorable ambition, and education, both primary and advanced, recognizing a new province of work in preparing students for the public service." In that happy day may come to pass what is written,

"Tenure of office depends on everybody's good behavior."

In our day General Grant has said, "The free school is the promoter of that intelligence which is to preserve us a free nation," and Hon. George S. Boutwell, "Liberty can never die in the presence of a people universally and thoroughly educated." Yet between 1870 and 1880 there was an increase of two million illiterates in this country, while it is estimated that by June, 1888, the money lying idle in the Treasury of the United States will reach the sum of one hundred and forty million dollars.

"Only great objects can worthily occupy a boy's heart," says the great Richter, "and what except knowledge can fill it better than his love of country? This holy flame should be fanned in all schools."

"But what can we do with these great subjects in the primary school?" asks one of our Massachusetts educators. "Everything! Born under the American flag, if by the age of ten the child's eye has not learned to kindle and his heart to thrill at the sight of the stars and stripes there is little hope of patriotism."

Prof. Wm. T. Harris asserts: "The consciousness of belonging to a nation acts and reacts constantly on one's character. To belong to a noble nation like Great Britain or the United States strengthens the spiritual backbone. The English backbone is eight hundred years long

and thick in proportion. To be a Roman citizen in the time of the Cæsars,—we know what that meant."

Says Prof. Vose, *apropos* of the study of civics in our schools: "The signs of the times are unmistakable. The work may go hard for awhile and we may have to employ some crude alternatives for true methods. But true methods will come in due time"; for, as Carlyle declares, "as soon as men get to discern the importance of a thing, they do infallibly set about arranging, facilitating, forwarding it, and rest not till in some approximate degree they have accomplished it."

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## CHAPTER XI.

"NO PESKY PALION."

"I AINT goin' to be no Pesky Palion I don't care what he says."

"I'd rather be a Piscopalyan than a shoutin' Methodis, any how."

"Who's said anything about shoutin' Methodis?"

"My mother says your mother's one. She says they jest groan an' holler an' scream down to your church."

"Well, my father says your father's nothin'

but a scaly Demercrat, an' that's a good deal wuss than a Methodis, anyhow."

Here a bigger boy interfered to prevent blows from the clenched fists:

"You better look out, you two. Whadder you know about it? Better go off and play marbles."

This short but significant conversation was the result of a little "religious training," which the "high church" principal had seen fit to give the pupils one Friday afternoon. The relative claims of creeds is seldom a subject of controversy among twelve-year-old schoolboys, but similar comparisons have characterized every phase of religious agitation since men grew wise enough to quarrel with their brains as well as with their clubs.

Nearly three years ago President Seelye of Amherst College gave a fresh impetus to the discussion of religious education by his question in the *Forum*, "Is there any reason why we should teach the life of Julius Cæsar in our schools and not the life of Jesus Christ?" It was the cause of much spirited controversy which waxes warmer every day, and in the same publication for January, 1888, Rev. Minot J. Savage of Boston truly says, "Circumstances are just now pushing the moral and religious side of the school question to the front, and it must soon be dealt with in some practical way."

• Dr. Seelye claims that "the State should pro-



vide religious instruction for its own preservation." Dr. Savage replies: "It is none of the State's business to establish an insurance bureau for the safety of souls after they have passed beyond the limits of the State's jurisdiction. The State is vitally interested in the morality of its citizens, but as a State it can have no interest whatever in the question as to what their religion is or whether they have any at all. There is even a touch of the absurd in a man's asking a share of the public money to pay for the work of saving his child's soul in some other world."

Rev. Edward L. Neill said recently before the Minnesota State Teachers' Association, "Schools are not intended to teach religion. The common schools have nothing to do with the other world or in preparing the scholars for heaven." Dr. Norman Macleod declares with unmistakable emphasis, "The longer I live the more am I convinced that the more perfect the government, the less it should interfere with religion. If men won't do right because it is right, what is the good of it? Give me freedom with all its risks."

Thus radically do individuals—men eminent for their intellectual ability and moral character, Christian ministers even,—differ concerning this latter-day problem.

Some one has answered the famous question asked by Dr. Seelye by saying that there could be no possible objection to teaching the life of Jesus Christ as well as that of Julius Cæsar, pro-

vided it could be taught in the same way. But it is just here that the difficulty arises. The instant that the divinity of Christ is asserted by his followers, a host of the "unregenerate," as the word is theologically used, arise to combat the notion, and trouble promptly begins.

The philosopher Kant considered morality and religion as identical, and the evangelical church accepts his decision. But setting aside all theological and technical terms, all shades of doctrine, all limitations of creeds and denominations, we must concede that whether or not we can have morality without religion, it is very sure that we can have no religion without morality, any more than we can have a train of cars without a railroad.

But to quote again from Dr. Savage, "If religion is absolutely essential to morality, we cannot leave the matter all in the air. We must go on and ask, what religion?—whose religion? Are not justice and fair play not only qualities of all true Americans, but some small part at least of all decent religions? There are moral men in all religions, and with no religion,—as that word is commonly used."

Sure enough, what religion, whose religion? With representative men of every denomination setting forth, as they have lately done in the pages of the *North American Review*, the reasons for their belief, who among us dares to arrogate to himself the right to dictate concerning the faith or practice of his fellows?

In a fine article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1887, George Frederick Parsons thus writes, "Everywhere the influence of the spiritual upon life is declining, and this notwithstanding some appearance to the contrary. Intellectual assent to doctrines never translated into practice, has indeed been the world's favorite method of evading its higher duties and obligations in all times."

Nearly forty years before, Ralph Waldo Emerson said substantially the same thing: "The moral influence of the intellect is wanting. We hearken in vain for any profound voice speaking to the American heart, cheering timid men, animating the youth, consoling the defeated, and intelligently announcing duties which clothe life with joy, and endear the face of land and sea to men."

Prof. Charles E. Lowrey thus writes in *Education* for March 1888: "A learned divine of national reputation delivered a Thanksgiving address in one of the great educational centers of our country. He speaks not of the Mayflower nor boasts of our national prosperity. In fact the venerable seer breathes not a word of thankfulness, for he sees no evidence of divine presence in the signs of the times. The condemnation of other republics is upon ours. To the survivor of the pristine virtues of our sires, society has become a troubled sea."

It is not a pessimistic, but a purely practical

view of the situation which leads every thinking mind to see and realize the danger threatening character in the unsettling of religious beliefs, independence of thought and action, and above all in the making haste to be rich characteristic of our age and country. When men boldly assert, without shame, or risk of contradiction, that "the best liar makes the best tradesman," and that "no successful business can be carried on without cheating," is it not high time to consider the present condition and the future outlook of our social and business life?

There can be no difference of opinion as to whether or not our young people should be instructed in righteousness,—the "right-doing," about which all men agree, whatever "the difference in the special hue of truth they look at through their human prisms." Socrates with his marvellous logic said virtue consisted in knowledge. To do right was the only road to happiness, and as every man sought to be happy, vice could arise only from ignorance, or mistake as to the means. What is the honorable and the base? What is the just and the unjust? he questioned. Men that knew these matters he accounted good and honorable; men that were ignorant of them he assimilated to slaves. The great philosopher even anticipated the controversy of our day concerning religious teaching. "Do these inquirers," he sharply asks, "think that they already know human affairs

well enough that they thus begin to meddle with divine?"

"The foundation of culture is the moral sentiment," declares Emerson, as Montaigne has asserted, "The advantages of study are to make us wiser and better."

"Knowledge is always power, but it is not always beneficent power," writes Mrs. Horace Mann. "It is a well-known fact that some of the greatest criminals in society have been men of ability and knowledge. These divorced from conscience made them only the more powerful for evil."

Says John Stuart Mill: "Education has for its object, besides calling forth the greatest possible quantity of intellectual power, to inspire the intensest love of truth."

"It is not what the best men do, but what they are, that constitutes their truest benefactions to their fellow-men," is a remark of the Rev. Phillips Brooks.

Bishop Huntington declares: "Moral judgment, conscience, and will are quite as valuable as apprehension, acquisition, and memory. Where they dwindle or are overshadowed it is not only the symmetry of a complete individual manhood that must suffer; society will be disordered."

Says Prof. Bain: "The difficulties of moral teaching exceed in every way difficulties of intellectual teaching. The method is ham-



pered by so many conditions that it barely admits of precise statement or demonstration, Morality is in the situation of the mother tongue.—it does not depend solely on the school teaching or on any one source ; it is imbibed from innumerable sources, and the school does not rank even as one of the chief." This is what Emerson means when he says, "You send your child to the schoolmaster, but 'tis the school-boys who educate him. You send him to the Latin class, but much of his tuition comes, on his way to school, from the shop windows," and Jean Paul declares that "no man can take a walk without bringing home an influence on his eternity."

The question as to how morals should be taught in the schoolroom, naturally follows the admission that it is necessary that they should be taught. Fortunately it is just now a matter which is receiving the attention of some of our most logical and clear-headed thinkers, and before long a satisfactory solution may be given. Notwithstanding the statement of Aristotle, "Only when the mind has become noble and inclined to goodness can instruction in morality be given with advantage," we know that much indirect teaching is necessary in order to make the mind incline to goodness. The formal teaching of morality, recognized under the technical name of Ethics, will naturally be deferred until its proper season.

For years there has been much discussion concerning the reading of the Bible in the public schools. To paraphrase the incisive words of President Seelye, "Is there any reason why we should read Bacon or Byron in our schools and not the Bible?" There can be no possible objection to reading the Bible as well as Bacon and Byron, provided it could be read in the same way. As the life of Christ is an inspiring example of unselfishness, manliness, and devotion to the highest ideals, full of all things pure, lovely, and of good report, so the history, the poetry, the moral and dramatic element found so largely in the Bible make the book one of our literary treasures with which even the skeptic and the scoffer might be loth to part. There is no reason why we may not tell children the qualities of one of the noblest natures ever embodied in human form, or read to them the grandest poetry and soundest philosophy of which the human intellect is capable.

In some quarters a compromise has been affected,—the spirit of the reading has been given up while the letter has been kept. Judge Noah Davis calls reading without comment "horizontal reduction," and "a concession that is a confession."

But is not the reading of the Bible without comment better than no reading at all, provided judgment is used in the selections? It can without question aid in moral and literary edu-

cation, and can be profitably used in connection with the teaching of ancient geography and history. If it cannot be read without additional comment, should it be read at all?

It is assumed that some teachers, to whom the book is nothing less than a divine revelation, feel unable and unwilling to make only this utilitarian use of it. Let such heed the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes and deny the truth of them if they can. "If a human soul is necessarily to be trained up in the faith of those from whom it inherits its body" (or from those from whom it receives its education) "why, there is the end of all reason. If, sooner or later, every soul is to look for the truth with its own eyes, the first thing is to recognize that no presumption in favor of any particular belief arises from the fact of our inheriting it."

We must endure narrowness, intolerance, bigotry in the pulpit, where we expect more or less of it,—at any rate where we get it, whether we expect it or not; in law, where unprincipled practitioners can be hired to advocate any cause regardless of its character; in medicine, where some physicians prefer to kill a patient by the treatment of a particular school, rather than cure him by the method of any other; but let us in the name of humanity banish it forever from the profession of teaching. The teacher trains the future ministers, lawyers, and doctors, as well as their parishioners, clients, and patients,

By virtue of his office he should be the broadest-minded man under the whole heavens. If he is not, wherein lies our hope for the future?

It is not only in the reading of the Bible but in the teaching of history, that certain teachers are tempted, almost beyond what they can bear, to enforce particular dogmas. The study of history should in some respects be conducted as carefully as Scripture readings. The teaching can easily be made to converge to particular theological and political points, dear to the heart of the instructor, profoundly believed in by him, and, in some cases, taught with the same conscientiousness as led Saul to persecute the Christians. But it is certainly incumbent upon him to experience a change of heart in this direction with as little delay as possible.

As says Superintendent A. P. Marble of Worcester, Mass.: "To enforce through the textbooks and the teachers the teaching of opinions held by the majority, is a kind of oppression of the minority. The object of the school is education, not the promulgation of any one set of opinions; the development of the powers, and not storing pupil's minds with the opinions and thoughts of older people."

Wm. Hawley Smith of Peoria, Ill., the author of that most entertaining and instructive book, "The Evolution of Dodd," thus writes:

"In the evolution of character in these last days, the public school has come to be a most

important factor. To it has been assigned a task equal to, if not exceeding, that of any other agency that has to deal with human nature. It is more important than can be set forth that it do its work well. It is not so doing now, however, to nearly the extent of which it is capable. Too much it has become a mere machine, a mill for grinding out graduates. As such, it is unworthy its high estate. As such, it now exists in a multitude of cases. As such, it should no longer be tolerated. From such a condition it must be redeemed. "The system has largely lost sight of the grandest thing in all the world, namely, the individual soul. In addressing itself to humanity collectively, as a herd, it makes a fatal mistake, one that must be corrected and that speedily. Characters cannot be manufactured like pins, by the million, neither can salvation be handled in job lots.

No teacher can leave moral training out of any course of study. The very atmosphere of the school-room is charged with influences for either good or evil, while every word and act of the teacher has its weight on either one side or the other. Nor need he be troubled as to how much moral teaching he shall do. The amount can be limited only by his opportunity, and, in some cases, by the amount of his courage. For, as truly in this nineteenth century as in the historic Dark Ages of the world, are men made martyrs to their principles when they dare to



assert them and to live up to them in the face of social opposition. One case will serve for illustration.

A young man in one of the Middle States had been employed but a short time in a certain school when he was called upon by some suspicious members of the committee for the purpose of further examination as to his moral qualifications. A long and excited conversation was ended by the young man, who said, "Gentlemen, it is useless for you to argue these matters, and unbecoming in me to do so. Allow me, instead, to state to you in writing what I call my creed, and then decide at your next meeting whether you wish me to continue my work among you." The proposition was accepted and the communication was looked for with interest. It ran thus: "I believe with Froebel that there is a divinity in every little child. I venerate that incarnation of the Deity. I try to teach my pupils, by precept and example, to do right because it is right, to show them why it is wrong to quarrel, tell tales, lie, steal, cheat, or swear. I do all in my power to make them abhor tobacco and all intoxicating drinks. I will never use my influence for any political party or religious creed, while I try to make them familiar with the fundamental principles of all morality and good government." The document settled his fate, as he had a reason to fear it would. By a vote of the

majority of the Board of Trustees, all church members, and two of them receiving enormous rents from popular drinking-saloons, it was decided that the young man was unfit to retain his position, and his resignation was accordingly requested.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### GREEN APPLES AND GOOSEBERRIES.

"COMPOSITION is writing down something you've made up in your own head." There is no fault to be found with this definition until it is extended to the process of writing out something that originated in the head of somebody else.

The editor of a magazine not long ago received this note: "Dear Sir, The enclosed poem is original in me and I didn't have any help in writing it out. There is more where this come from if I had an inducement to think them up. You may say 'original' at the top of this poem for every word is by the author."

The power to express one's ideas is most desirable, and for such work only two simple things are needed—ideas, and the skill to clothe them in words. But first, the ideas. The process is not materially different from that of cooking the hare,—first catch your hare.

And while you are about it, perhaps it is well to make sure that the animal is your property and not your neighbor's.

Nothing in our schools is more desirable than composition work, if—Ah, that "if"! "Much virtue in an If," says Touchstone.

The development of the child's mind may be fairly supposed to bear some relation to the growth of his body. His father's boots may fit him one of these days, though they will trip him up now if he tries to walk in them. His own small shoes serve him perfectly for the present. His ideas are in proportion, very good what there are of them, and a good many of them, considering the short time he has lived.

He is familiar, for instance, with his finger-nails ; he has seen his father using things of the same name in putting down the sitting-room carpet ; once he trod with his little bare foot on an article of that sort, and received a lively impression of its size, shape, and strength. In brief, he has acquired ideas on nails. They are few in number, limited in range, lacking the broad horizon of the mature essayist, but they are his own as truly as are the fingers upon his hand. Consequently he is qualified to write a composition

#### "ON NAILS.

"Nails are made of iron nails are of four kinds Nails that you hammer with finger nails toe nails door nails and tacks."

He comprehends the word "parents" after his brain has appropriated the definition, in the same way as his stomach appropriated the bread which he ate for breakfast. He is then able to write another one

"ON PARENTS.

"Parents are of two kinds male and female. What should we do without parents?"

This production has at least the brevity which is "the soul of wit," even if the wit itself is lacking. Possibly a realizing sense of what such a deprivation might be, froze the genial current in the soul of the young writer, and prevented him from elaborating the theme.

There is a certain flavor of the Sunday-school in the next production, but there is no reason why the child's religious and secular education should not harmonize. There is often great complaint when they fail to do so. The metaphor slips gracefully into the literary work

"ON WATER.

"Water is hard water soft water and the water of life and soft water has rigglers in it."

His elucidation of another subject shows honest thought and observation, so far as his opportunities have permitted. He writes

"ON COWS.

"Cows are of two kinds good Cows and bad Cows and red Cows. I dont like the Cows that

hook you some do Cows is bigger than Cats and Dogs and Carfs and as big as Horses some of them are Cow giv us nice Milk the Milk Man carres Somthing round in tin Cans and sells it."

This composition is not beyond criticism in one or two minor points. It is not quite clear as to which class of cows the red cows belong, nor whether some cows hook you, or some folks like cows of that kind. The rather sudden departure from the main topic may be regarded as a mere pleasantry, or it may show that the small mind is enlarging, taking the first step on the analytical road, reasoning from cause to effect, from the concrete to the abstract, from the known to the unknown—at least as regards the contents of the cans.

He writes of

*"THE SCHOOLROOM.*

"My schoolroom has 6 Winders and 12 Pains of Glas in a Winder. That makes 72. Its a pleasant room only My Mother she Maid me a Pare of Pance and she Maid them to Tite and john O'Neill hes laffin at me and Teacher a Botons flew off and please may I go home rite quick."

This is no plagiarism, neither is it a translation from any of the old Italian poets. It is straightforward, honest, mental work, containing not even a quotation, unless we except the mathematical statement for which due credit must be



given to the multiplication table. To be sure, it has small mechanical errors in orthography and capitalization, as well as a somewhat faulty rhetorical style. But time can mend all that, perhaps even better than his miscalculating mother can mend the "Pance."

This same element of stanch honesty is particularly striking in the statement concerning

"WALKING.

"My favorite walk is when I do not have far to go for it."

This bears the unmistakable stamp of originality, for what can sound more familiar to the teacher's ear than the spontaneous "is when"? "A noun is when—" "Addition is when—" "A figure of speech is when—"

The information imparted in the following is a little too vague to be valuable:

"CRICKET.

"The game of cricket consists of six stumps two bats and a ball. Nor must we omit the balls which are four in number."

The writer is more sinned against than sinning, when on being assigned an abstract theme fit only for a Shelley or an Emerson, he thus discourses on

"BEAUTY.

"Beauty is something we see sometimes pretty

often and then again sometimes there isent a great deal of it. Some dogs are called a beauty. A man who comes to our house Sunday nights says my sisters a beauty but he don't know how she makes faces behind pars back wen he said no you sharnt have a seelskin sack this winter. And I dont know any more on Beauty."

The work of an Indian pupil in the school at Hampton, Virginia, is most refreshing from its evident genuineness as well as the imagination displayed. Like Sam Weller's valentine it might be said to be "werging on the poetical."

"One day, bright day, and the little bird happy and stood on a log and sang all day long. That bird doesn't know anything about cat. She thinks nobody is near to her. But behind the near log one sly cat is watching, She want to eat for supper, and she thinks about stealing all the time. The old cat came very slow, and by and by she go after the little bird, but she does not see him and sang loud again. She sang just like this. I always try to do what is right. When I ever died I go to heaven. That bird said these all words and I shall not forget the bird what it said, and these all words it said and after two or three minutes go died. That cat jumped and catch and kill, eat all up except little things from bird, wings, legs or skin, and that bird is glad to die because she is very good bird. That little bird has last time sang, and very happy was that little bird after that."

Equally creditable is one by a German pupil after three weeks' residence in this country:

"The tree is a used thing for us. He is good for us in the summer when the sun shines. A tree has much branch. The tree gives us in summer so much fruit. He gives us appels, pears, plums. We calls the tree like the fruit. On a tree where grow appels we said, it is an appel tree, and on the tree where grow pear, we said it is an pear tree. We have in our garden two appel, two pear and one plums tree. My mother make pie of them. In the tree are so much bird that sing. We must be kind to God that he gave us the tree."

It is certainly easier to go to work with our material already in our hands, than to be obliged to manufacture it before we can use it. If children are not sufficiently advanced to evolve their own ideas, and need, as they certainly do, practice in expression, why should not the ideas be generously given them and their work thereby limited to what they are able to do?

All children know what a hot summer day is, and of late years even city children are acquainted with our imported pest known as "a sparrow." It cannot, therefore, be difficult for any one to understand this little story as it is read aloud:

"On a hot summer day, some little fat sparrows  
Thought 'twould be cooling to fly fast as arrows  
Over the wall to a nice shady nook  
And take a fresh bath in the clear flowing brook.

But they splashed and they chirped and made such a commotion,  
That they turned the clear brook to a real little ocean ;  
And the two little sisters who'd watched them at play  
Laughed out then so gayly, it scared them away."

This material is "worked up" as follows :

"It was hot one day in the summer and sum little sparrers thout it would be nice an cool to fly into a Brooke an they flied in an it was over a Wall an they made a good deal of nose a chirpering an they took a barth an the little Brooke run into the osan an the little girls were so Scared they larfed."

Here is more trouble with orthography, but as this exercise is merely in expression of ideas, one can make due allowance. In Prof. Bain's words, "After the very best classification the attainment of English spelling is a work of long time and detail, the result of combined reading, writing from dictation, and extensive practice under correction." The spelling of the English language was not settled in a day, though we are sometimes surprised that children do not learn it in a week or two. As regards the literary merit of the tiny story, what fault can be found with it?—setting aside the singular psychological effect stated in the last words, the result of a slight misunderstanding concerning the relation of the "scare" to the "laugh."

But when, instead of placing before the child such simple mental diet, he is set to masticate

tremendous mouthfuls of the rich and solid fare of "Festus," one stands appalled at the digestive process:

"We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best ;  
And he whose heart beats quickest lives the longest,  
Lives in one hour more than in years do some  
Whose fat blood sleeps, as it slips along their veins.  
Life is but a means unto an end ; that end,  
Beginning, mean, and end of all things,—God.  
The dead have all the glory of the world."

"Digestion is simulating your food," states a pupil. "Digestion is disintegrating all the things you eat if you eat anything," says another. There is evident "disintegration" here.

"We are alive when we do something and not just count the years when we are alive. We must think and not breathe feelings are not like the figures on a clock. We ought to try to feel our heartbeats. He has the most lives who thinks the most, lives as noble as he can and acts the best he knows how to. He who has the quickest heart has the longest life. In one hour he can live a great deal longer than some who are fat and when the blood sleeps instead of slipping through the veins life means that everything has an end the end and the beginning means that all things are God and the dead people have all the glory there is."

Says wise old Roger Ascham, "There is a



kind of Paraphrase which may be used without hurt to moch proffet." (Evidently this is not the kind.) Again, "The scholer shall winne nothing by Paraphrase onelie to choose worse words, to gather up faultes which hardlie will be left of againe." This result is a very natural one, but, "Paraphrase has, nevertheless, a good place in learning, but not, in myne opinion for any scholer, but is onelie to be left to a perfite Master."

The evolution of a composition from literary protoplasm, the process of secretion, nutrition and growth, when carried on with the aid of a teacher, is a most curious and interesting operation, though its value is largely dependent upon circumstances. Some persons are even rash enough to assert that it has no value under any circumstances.

Given a subject, the pupil sets conscientiously to work.

"Better be Trampled in the Dust than Trample on a Fellow-Creature."

"We ought all to follow the Golden Rule. We do not want any one to take advantage of us and we ought to be extremely careful how we take advantage of them. We ought to do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you. It is very easy for some people to trample others in the dust, though everybody will refrain from doing it with a kind heart. Every one should remember that they are brothers and that God

is their Father. Then we shall all be just to our fellow-creatures."

The subject does not prove a particularly suggestive one to the young mind. The owner of the mind has never been trampled either in literal or metaphorical dust, nor has she ever felt the slightest desire to serve in that disagreeable fashion any member of the human family. Evidently she cannot follow the direction, "Look in thy heart and write." She gazes ruefully at the one sheet of note-paper bearing all the ideas she has been able to cudgel from her brains with the most persistent belaboring. It will take at least five pages of that size to make a graduation essay of respectable length. Where in chaos is she to look for the ideas wherewith to cover the other four? A camel may be evolved from the inner consciousness, but it would be as easy for the camel to go through the eye of a needle as for her to successfully trample under foot the difficulties which beset her dim and dusty way. She wishes she had taken the other subject proposed, "The Comparative Claims of the Pisistratidæ, Harmodius and Aristogiton, to the Government of the Grecian Monarchy." She had eighty-nine per cent. in Grecian history, and there is something about that subject in the cyclopedia.

But the teacher is patient, earnest, even enthusiastic, faithful "in season and out of season," and a vast deal of "exhibition" work must be done in a season which is decidedly "out."

Saturday is not always a holiday, nor Sunday a day of rest to the composition teacher. The programme must be varied, the essays interesting, the whole affair a credit to the school. She feels very much as if washing her fingers "in invisible water with imperceptible soap" as she handles the poor little embryonic page and realizes all that is in waiting for her and for her pupil who must be "psychologized," "stimulated," "incited to think," "educated up to it," or whatever it seems most satisfactory to call the peculiar process. Then follows a long succession of interviews also "in season and out of season," principally "out," sandwiched in between recitations, prolonged after hours in the schoolroom, and often carried on in the home of the teacher. A few inches will serve as a specimen of these yards of educational dialogue:

"Of course we can consider this only as the outline—the beginning of your essay. It must be at least five minutes long, though it would be better if it were ten or fifteen."

"Yes, I suppose so, but I can't think of anything more to say."

"Well, my dear, I am to teach you how to think. We must see how we can elaborate the subject. That is the benefit you get from working on a composition. It enlarges your ideas, your vocabulary. Some of these expressions are not correct grammatically; for instance, the tense of this verb is—"

"Oh, dear, I knew better than that, of course. I didn't think." The development of the idea was so difficult that no particular heed was given to the form of expression; it was a triumph to get it to express itself in any shape, and only a magician can keep two plates spinning in the air at the same time.

"Your first sentence is rather abrupt, don't you think so? And if you refer to the golden rule there is no need of quoting it farther on, as every one is supposed to know it. In fact, your third sentence, as you see, don't you?—is only a repetition of the first. When you say 'it is very easy,' etc., don't you think it would brighten up your paper a good deal if you gave some striking illustrations? You might mention Napoleon's career—I will make out a list of books for you to look over, then you may re-write that part of your essay—perhaps you can think of some other historical incidents which could be woven in nicely—and bring it to me again to-morrow."

To-morrow might be written down like some of the chapters in old reading-books, which always had so depressing an appearance to lovers of novelty, "Same subject, Continued." The next day and the next is still the "Same subject, Continued," until at the end of a month which, "like a wounded snake drags its slow length along," the theme is happily varied by the substitution, "Same subject, Concluded."

The teacher's frame of mind over the completed composition cannot truthfully be called exultant. "We have just had our graduation exercises," wrote one of these teachers from the west a few months ago. "Everything passed off well, and everybody appeared delighted. Now I am beginning on the next set of essays. The old inflammation of the eyes which troubled me so much years ago has returned worse than ever,—probably from the amount of night-work—and I have a constant headache. But these are small matters in comparison with my degradation of soul. I feel as if I had inexpressibly lowered myself by doing the work that is required in this school, aiding and abetting the girls in a sort of mental sheep-stealing, for, of course, these essays are much more mine than theirs. The worst of it is I must pretend that I consider it all right and honest. I have no difficulty with the majority, but when I find a girl a little more conscientious or less conceited than the average! I've just had such a case, and it was harder for me to manage than all the rest put together. I am sure that the girl has lost every particle of respect for me, and I am not surprised. But what can I do? I cannot afford to give up this position, for since father became helpless with paralysis, sister Emma has been left a widow with three little children. If I were idle for a month I don't know what would become of the two families, and, as you know, my



salary here is large. I cannot see to write more. I have written this much in a sort of desperation to beg you, in your labor on behalf of teachers, to emphasize this one matter of composition work. It will help not only teachers, but their unconscious victims."

"Unconscious victims"! What weird significance in those last two words! And this is but one of a large number of similar letters all playing upon the same sad, minor theme with individual variations. One correspondent breaks into a major strain for a few lines:

"It is comical business,—if looked at in one way. During the first half-dozen talks with the pupil I manage to get out piecemeal nearly all the first part of her essay and get in my own ideas. I refrain from meddling with the rest until that much is safely accomplished. Then I attack the end and work backward for another half-dozen interviews, leaving the middle untouched. Finally I concentrate my forces upon that and re-model the middle, giving finishing touches at the same time to certain crude spots all through the paper. The fun of it all is to see how firmly the girl believes that she has written the whole of it! Well, it is certainly her composition in the same sense as the man's shoes were the same pair he had worn for ten years, having new uppers every spring, and every winter new soles. But, after all, this is anything but a laughing matter."

In the mean time the young woman who is thoroughly convinced that she would prefer to be Trampled than to Trample, etc., has copied, for a number of times that she has long before lost count of, the paper with which she is well pleased both on account of the quantity as well as the quality of the Dust and her Fellow-Creatures.

"There is a valuable thought contained in these words. They are the utterance of a truth which strikes the key-note of all civilized human intercourse. It is the practical application of that most beneficent moral lesson promulgated by the Great Teacher, Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you.

"Yet in our social world there are many violations of this great principle of justice. Napoleon after his celebrated passage of the Alps; in the celebrated battle of Marengo which decided the fate of Italy; causing himself to be elected First Consul for life with supremepower; issuing the Berlin Decree; appropriating most of the thrones of Europe; driving to South America the royal family of Portugal"; etc., etc., "was totally ignoring that great principle," etc., etc., etc.

Truly, here is the original fowling-piece, changed only by the addition of a new lock, stock, and barrel.

The first draught shows the original thought of the young writer. As the subject presented

few ideas to her mind, she naturally expressed but few, and those few not particularly entertaining to an audience. She went straight to the point, but it took less than half a minute to get there, and the trip to be properly imposing should consume at least five. It was a happy thought to travel back a few years and climb with Napoleon to the top of what another pupil calls "the mountains which are in the Alps."

Has the mental power of the writer thereby been increased? Has her vocabulary been enlarged, the logical faculty developed, a good style formed? Are the conditions of these feverish last weeks of the term with the extra labor of reviews, the anxieties of examinations, the measurings and fittings of the dressmaker, favorable to genuine mental growth?

But shall no compositions be written and read by the pupils, or being read, shall they be given in their original crudity? The answer to this question depends wholly upon the answer to another, What is the object of the writing and reading of compositions?

It is *apropos* of this sort of literary leverage that Richter writes: "A nothing writes to a nothing; the whole affair undertaken by the desire of the teacher, not of the heart, is a certificate of the death of thoughts. Happy is it if the commanding volubility of the child, arising from coldness and addressed to emptiness, do not accustom her to insincerity." But it does,

and that is the worst of it, though there are many other hurtful elements about it.

Not long ago Mrs. M. L. Rayne, of the Detroit School of Journalism, made this frank admission to the *Journal of Education* :

"It has happened that I have been called upon many times in my life to write the graduating essays of college boys and girls and high school pupils, and in nearly every case I have acquiesced. The pupil who is about to graduate is already bearing an accumulation of burdens in the review of old studies, the constant mental strain, the over-taxing of all the intellectual faculties, and the severe physical strain which attends the closing of a long hard season of intellectual labor." After stating that in view of these circumstances she considered herself justified in assisting students, she speaks of the manner in which these documents are usually produced in schools where there is no special composition teacher, where the other teachers are too busy to do more than suggest a topic, and where friends and relatives are appealed to for help. "The girl is finally referred to Irving and Macaulay for style and expression. With the masterpieces of English literature before her, the pupil at last produces a mosaic of thoughts and sentences in which there is neither individuality, observation, originality, or anything but penmanship and adaptation. This is the average essay of the public school graduate."

This is followed by a noble protest in a subsequent issue of the same journal: "Granting all the circumstances, shall the pupil present this essay to an audience as her own? And will any teacher approve such a performance? Let us hope not. What is the motive of such a plot? Is its design to save life, health, wealth, or education? If I analyze the matter aright, the motive can be at best but personal pride. If you approve of such plagiarism among pupils upon the spur of pride, how will you teach that a cash motive is criminal? When any person encourages pupils to weigh the claims of childish or parental pride against those of truth, she is teaching lessons all too often learned and far too often illustrated in the criminal annals of the day."

Are these the words of wisdom or of foolishness? Does observation and experience prove or disprove them?

Commenting upon the same subject, a school principal, George W. F. Price of Nashville, Tenn., writes thus forcibly: "Under precisely similar conditions, while resisting solicitations to write essays for graduation, I have been led to give a degree of assistance in the way of corrections, emendations, and substitutions, far greater than the real interests of the pupil required, or the principles of educational philosophy would sanction. Girls often present commencement essays at the close of a school career who have never



once during their entire course composed any creditable literary work. As an exponent of the pupil's knowledge, it is unreliable; as a test of mental discipline, it is fallacious; as a proof of literary ability, it is wholly untrustworthy; as an index of the kind of training which the school offers, it has no value." He also proposes a remedy for these evils: "Abandon a public exhibition which tortures the pupil, annoys the teacher, and leaves to the public, after a mild thrill of parental and neighborly exultation, the shrug of suspicion or the gibe of scorn." If with all its faults the first draught of the composition is a fair specimen of the original work the pupil is able to do after the regular amount of instruction, why is it not as legitimate a showing of her attainments in that direction as in mathematics or the sciences?

If the object is the entertainment of an audience, why not place the essay on the same honest footing as the violin solo or piano duet? Nobody supposes that these musical performances are the result of school training. Why should there be any attempt to make the literary exercises appear so?

A teacher asked a pupil if he could prove the problem in division which he had upon his slate. "Yes, I could prove it easy enough if it wasn't all wrong," was the answer. The same trouble is found in the composition problem. The divisor,—the teacher, multiplied by the quotient,—the

composition, would equal the dividend,—the pupil, if the process had been correct. Unfortunately the result is far in excess of the original amount.

There is another difficulty in the way of "proving" this sort of work. "Don't use my name," is the formula which in nearly every letter received from teachers takes the place and means the same as the more common phraseology, "Burn this as soon as read." There is more than one helpless father, widowed sister, and orphan child to be cared for by devoted women who have no freedom of choice between principle and pocket. One cannot walk barefooted, no matter how much the shoe pinches, nor rest by the roadside while there are others to be carried along the way.

Impossibilities are attempted in composition work. Rather than "give up beat" teachers reluctantly put their own "shoulder-blades to the wheels," and verily we can all "shee them go round." But with what friction,—what wear and tear to the machinery! And is anybody in the world wiser or better for this enormous expenditure of time and force?

How refreshing to read once more some of the genuine "composition" work; to turn to the rough, uncut, but honest stones, after the shallow and sickly sparkle of the poor paste diamonds.

"It says in one of the great authors that dreams is the stuff nightmares are made of. I

have the nightmares. My grammar says its pie grammars don't like to have there pies cut. jim says my cousin its hookin the pie taint eating it that makes the nightmares, nightmares aint as nice as the pie and this is all I know about dreams."

"Do you think that Jesus hung up his stocking Christmas eve to be filled by Santa Claus? If you do you are much mistaken. And why did he not? One reason was that he had none. And why had he none? Because he was born in the torrid zone, where stockings are never used. Nor are they to this day."

Still the art of composition has been steadily improving during the last twenty years, if one may judge from the style of an "oration" prepared that length of time ago and delivered at an Academy commencement.

"THE ELEMENTS AND USES OF HISTORY.

"The phenomena of nature exists by the sacred symbols of this golden age. There are pyramids and temples of Ucatan seen to have been old in the days of Pharioh, when Nero, Romilus, and Sylvius Procras were leaving a type of stagnation by their elemental mystery to be recorded upon the scanty catalogue of the benefactors of the human kind. Greece wears a stain upon the annals of history by chaining Socrates, the executioner who administered that poisonous plant with its fatal touch caused death to take posses-

sion of a mind which was as strong as a sturdy oak bursting forth from a little acorn, causing the acuteness of some happy observer to reflect upon the laws of nature. Napoleon, when the fortunes of war overtook him we find him incarcerated in the gloomy prison wall at St. Helena. Lafayette went forth with that guiding spirit which conducted him over the pathless ocean to his countries call, and after that felicitous theory he worked out a niche that will radiate forever upon America's brightest pages. Wise and useful shipmasters were guided by the magnet from off the shoals and quicksands so Washingtons history guided by the elements that float like the little moats in the sunbeam. At the first struggles of our national conflicts our brave and generous sons fought upon the threshold of liberty bearing in one hand a true spirit of Seventy-six and in the other a banner which has been reddened by its gore. The heroes who upheld every intrest of their country in facing death all along the peninsula and victorious over Lee at Richmond add epitaphs to that mournful shaft determined that no plume of her renown should ever be defaced."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## "A DOUBLE-SCULL RACE."

"A DOUBLE-SCULL race," remarked an old lady, catching sight in the newspaper of an item on the subject. "Thet's something like. Mebbe now there'll be a stop put to this everlastin' talkin' about fillin' childern's heads fuller'n they can hold. Seems to me we don't hear nothin' else these days."

"Cram" is a short word, easy to spell, easy to pronounce, while its meaning is perfectly plain to Strasburg geese and nineteenth-century children in all the civilized countries of the globe. It has also secured good and regular standing in our dictionaries, where it makes an innocent appearance as "Preparation for an examination by a hasty review of studies."

So far as known, the late Prof. W. Stanley Jevons, one of England's most eminent scholars, is the only advocate who has appeared on behalf of Cram in the famous case of Croaker *vs.* Cram, a litigation which bids fair to rival that of Jarn-dyce and Jarndyce. In some respects it resembles that historic lawsuit. "It has passed into a joke," for one thing. "It still drags its weary length before the court, perennially hopeless. Even those who have contemplated its history from the outermost circle of such evil



have been insensibly tempted into a loose way of letting bad things alone to take their own bad course, and a loose belief that if the world go wrong, it was, in some off-hand manner, never meant to go right. Innumerable children have been born into the cause." Poor Miss Flite has the company of thousands of similar clients. Like her they say, "I have the honor to attend court regularly—with my documents. From whence do these papers come, you say? That is the great question. I expect a judgment shortly—at the day of judgment."

In the mean time the learned advocate thus argues: "This word has all the attributes of a perfect *question-begging epithet*. It is short, emphatic, and happily derived from a disagreeable physical metaphor. There is no difficulty in seeing that Cram means two different things, what I call Good Cram and Bad Cram." Brilliant illustration of a distinction without a difference—"what I call a Good Evil and a Bad Evil." This can hardly fail to remind one of the definition of metaphysics—"Metaphysics, the consideration of immateriality, substance without solidity, neither large nor small, hot nor cold, wet nor dry, long nor short; the essence of an abstraction."

"All the world," some one says, "professes to be opposed to cramming, yet the system nevertheless goes on, not only unchecked, but to a greater extent year after year." Like malaria,

"Oh, no, we never have any of it here! There was talk a spell ago, of there bein' some over in the other deestrick." Teachers are the only ones to acknowledge its existence—when the doors are shut, the children playing outside, and the trustees have gone home to dinner. Later, the pupils, recess finished, return to the school-room to "study." An analysis of the peculiar process is interesting. Not long ago a little girl was 'studying' half-aloud a lesson in grammar, rocking herself to and fro, as her glib tongue kept time with the movement. "Appellations of the Deity should always begin with a capital. Appellations of the Deity should always begin with a capital. Appellations of the Deity should always begin with a capital."

An older sister, sewing near by, ventured the question, "What do you mean by appellations?" A blank stare. "I don't know. That's what the book says." "What do you mean by Deity?" Another stare, equally blank. "I don't know. Teacher didn't tell us to learn that. Don't bother me. I've got to study my lesson." So the intellectual exercise was resumed, accompanied by the rocking and the muttering, "Appellations of the Deity should always begin with a capital," until the "lesson" was declared "learned." Is it surprising that from brains thus cultivated should issue such statements as, "The head contains the brains when there is any."

"Topacto will make the bones weak and it will stump the groth."

"When the price of one article we must add to find the costs."

"A verb is anything expressed in words."

"The Saxon Cronicle gave notes to the Saxons."

"Orion was a very famous Latin astronomer."

"A fire ventilates the fireplace and produces a current filled with hot water or steam."

"In Mississippi when the cotton is ripe, cotton gin is poured into the pods to take the seeds out."

"The Greek translation of the New Testament was called Latin."

"John Skeleton satirised the church and all was in it expressing himself in a powerful masterfully way."

But the learned advocate in the cause of Cram insists, "Even in the worst kind of Cram the blockhead suffers no harm. To exercise the memory is better than to leave the brain wholly at rest." What a unique sort of logic! We must either cram or not cram. It is better to cram than not to cram. Therefore cram. Is this the strongest argument which the counsel for the defense can submit to an enlightened jury? Must it then resolve itself into a choice of evils—cramming or collapse? If so, the case is indeed hard for the complainant.

"It is one of the standing arguments for the

indestructibility of human nature that it has not been destroyed by the assaults of the schoolmaster," says an authority on this subject, the Rev. A. D. Mayo, and we can imagine the sly smile with which President Chadbourne of Williams College said that so far as his early education was concerned, the thing he was most thankful for was that he lived so far from the schoolhouse that he was absent most of the time.

Richter announced years ago, "The greatest, the most important, the most useful rule of all education is not to gain time but to lose it." If he were right, modern educators must be all wrong, for we can not go forward and backward, we can not hurry and stand still, we can not eat voraciously and starve to death, at the same time.

As long ago as 1848, Horace Mann wrote : "It seems to me that one of the greatest errors in education at the present day is the desire and ambition to teach in single lessons systems, doctrines, and theorems which years of analysis are scarcely sufficient to unfold." (Years of analysis ! Why, bless your heart, the dear children have no suspicion of any such fact. Their comfortable consciousness of wisdom is eminently self-satisfying. "Young America" is always "equal to the occasion," or thinks he is, which is probably the next best thing.) "All is administered in a mass. We strive to introduce knowledge into a child's mind the great end first,"

Sometimes, though, even under that process, it “comes out of the little end of the horn,” as—

“An ellipsis is an omission which omits words when ellipsis is omission allowable and supplies the mind which is certainty and readiness not obscuring the sense.”

That charming essayist and keen critic, the late Edwin P. Whipple, of Boston, once wrote, “The mischief of intellectual conceit in our day consists in its arresting mental growth at the start by stuffing the mind with the husks of pretentious generalities, which, while they impart no vital force and convey no real information, give seeming enlargement to thought and represent a seeming opulence of knowledge.”

This “seeming opulence” is no unfamiliar sort of wealth, even to the most impecunious instructors. Of such is :

“Breathing power is developed make the digestion stronger, make the animal heat increased accumulation of the fat diminished and to be in a open air and to have lots of outside exercise.”

“No other at the Court could vie with Sir Philip Sidney in punctilious adhearance to the current rules of the etiquette of the Court and times. Everybody fell victims to his suavity. He was of the most accurate and correct courtesy.”

Says a writer in a late number of the *Christian Union*, “There is an insane idea prevalent both in and out of the school-room that success in



study is measured not by the quality of knowledge acquired, but by the quantity of ground covered. The pupil crams himself with an array of names, dates, and events. He can tell you the date of the Magna Charta, but whether it was a document or an animal he hardly knows." Sometimes he does not consider it either the one or the other :

"Magner Carter was the place where the King had the exclusive right to kill game everywhere all over the kingdom and secured the great bull-work to the English people."

"Magna Chartar was secured by king John to take all the rights away from the people. It was called Magna Chartar because it was a big oak tree--somewhere in Connecticut."

Says Superintendent Stone, of Hyde Park, Mass., "The attempt to carry so many bundles of facts along ever-diverging lines overloads the memory, disheartens and disgusts the child." Sometimes the facts suffer in their turn. The little arms prove too short and weak for the many heavy and bulky bundles which they strive to embrace. The contents are liable to be spilled and thereby to become more or less mixed, as in

"Syren pertaining to Syria."

"Hierarchy, the house the pope lives in."

"Solution a compound of metals."

"You can remove the animal from the bone by putting it into the fire."

"The femur the largest bone in the body is situated in the ear."

"Brokerage is the hay and straw in which brakerble things are packed."

"Bent is a participle from the verb to be."

Says Dr. Hammond in the *Popular Science Monthly* for April, 1887: "For children to be reduced to one common level as they are in our schools almost without exception, and to have studies crowded upon them in advance of their brain development, are crimes against Nature which Nature in her blind way expiates by punishing the wrong person, but which those who know the right should promptly expose."

"Our school-masters," says Sir John Lubbock, "too often act as if all school-children were going to be school-masters themselves," and another writer, a fierce rebel against the English system, "They insist upon the infant mind gulping down tasteless masses of instructional porridge." Dickens has graphically described one of these English teachers: "One of a hundred and forty others turned out at the same time from the same factory on the same principles, like so many piano-forte legs. He had been put through an immense variety of paces and had answered volumes of head-breaking questions. Orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody, biography, astronomy, geography, and general cosmography, compound proportion, algebra, land surveying and leveling, vocal music, and draw-

ing from models, were all at the end of his ten fingers. He had taken the bloom off the higher branches of mathematics, physical science, French, German, Latin, and Greek. He knew all about all the watersheds of all the world and all the histories of all the peoples and all the names of all the rivers and mountains and all the productions, manners, and customs of all the countries and all their boundaries and bearings on all the points of the compass." Mr. M'Choakumchild is a type of a class of teachers so "educated," in America as well as in Europe, and who, in attempting, from the best of motives, to drag children along with them, as they stride in their intellectual seven-league boots over the province of all knowledge, seldom realize the desperate endeavors made by the pigmies who are trying to keep step with them. These are the instructors who perfectly agree with Mrs. Pipchin in her theory of education as unfolded to Mr. Dombey, "There is a great deal of nonsense and worse—talked about young people not being pressed too hard at first, and being tempted on and all the rest of it, sir. It never was thought of in my time, and it has no business to be thought of now. My opinion is, 'keep 'em at it'!" It is in reference to this system that another English writer, himself a famous teacher, thus expresses himself: "I say deliberately that there are persons who really deserve penal servitude for provoking what are neither more nor

less than brutal assaults on the brains and nerves of innocent children."

Squeers's school has been execrated ever since it was photographed and held up to public view, but in some respects the Squeers system is far ahead of Mr. M'Choakumchild's. "We go on the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby, the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, wind, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of a book, he goes and does it. When he has learned that botteney is a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby. What do you think of it?" To any one who thinks of it at all, it would seem that an occasional chance to exchange books and slates for scouring cloth and trowel, and an opportunity for taking object lessons out of doors might prove preferable to some other systems which are held in higher repute.

There is a vast difference of opinion concerning the amount of damage done by the cramming process. One writer thus holds forth on the "Terrible Results of Over-Study": "It is getting to be a well-accepted proposition that all children are simply mad to study themselves into mental paralysis and need to be held back by main force from knowing so much that they will 'bust.' To be sure we have never met any of this sort of children ourselves, and when we hunt for them they are all in some other city

a long distance off ; the sort we know require much labor and occasionally a club to encourage them to know anything at all. But this is now diabolical heresy and we do penance by republishing from the *Journal of Education* the following genuine composition written in 1879, by a Boston school girl in one of the best schools, who was evidently ruining her health by intellectual exertion : 'I would like to tell you what I have learned about the ruminous the cow is a domestic animal and the cow has four stumachs the cow is a domestic or tame animal. The cows eyes are made so that they can see back of themselves has well as forward and Sideways the cow is found in every Country. The cows horns are made out of buttons and knife handles. The cow chew gress and vetuable. The cow skin is made out of beef. The cow is divid into three groups. The cow is the most useful animal the cow is a clothen footthed animal. In side of the cow hon is a pith. It goes into the first Stumach where it is moisen and then it goes into the second Stumach it is soken, and then it goes into the three Stumach where it is made into balls. then it comes into the mouth wehr it chew again, and then goes into the fourth Stumach.' "

Few children "bust" as far as heard from, probably from successful use of main force, while the sort that requires the "occasional club" is by no means rare. But joking aside, what are the facts of the case? Even some teachers



assert that the injury done to children is wholly due to social dissipations of various sorts. But from whence come the children who fill our public schools? Do they not represent the middle and lowest classes of the community? An impression has somehow gained ground that social dissipations are indulged in principally by the class which patronizes fashionable boarding and private schools; but this must be a mistake. Then it is the children of our clerks and tradesmen, mechanics and laborers, who are brought up in these lives of luxurious and injurious ease; who are at a constant revel of balls and parties, theatres and operas; eating rich suppers every night; partaking of quail on toast, stewed terrapin and Welsh rarebit at irregular intervals through the day, feasting on miscellaneous pastry, and always having fancy boxes of confectionery heaped upon the toilette tables of their boudoirs.

Miss Julia Richman asserts as the results of her experience for fifteen years in a New York grammar school, "Worriment, overstudy, loss of appetite, and broken sleep are the rule and not the exception with girls in the First Grade classes."

But let the schools stand acquitted of all responsibility in the matter, since it is not the requirements of the school-room, but social dissipation which is the cause of this lamentable state of things.

Yet a host of fathers and mothers indignantly

protest against this charge of social dissipation,—working men and women who are waiting as patiently as they possibly can for their boys and girls to graduate from the public school that they may become bread-winners in their turn. These parents tell sorrowful, but, of course, grossly improbable, tales of long hours of home study ; restless nights, with no appetite for breakfast ; headaches, lassitude, irritability ; feverish anxiety accompanying examination days ; positive agony from fear of losing "marks," being "marked down," having "so low a per cent. that she can't pass," (it is usually "She")—these unreasonable fathers and mothers, disturbers of the public peace and the public school system, do not hesitate to declare, in the most emphatic and shameless manner, that these things are familiar experiences in the majority of households.

"My daughter has four lessons to prepare every day," one of these mothers boldly asserted. "Yesterday her algebra alone kept her busy till ten o'clock at night, and her father helped her all the evening. She did not even look at her other lessons, and she's so behindhand in her work that she is worrying herself to death for fear she won't be promoted." This was said of a sensitive, conscientious, rapidly-growing girl of fifteen, having before her a future with all its probabilities of household and maternal cares, with all the demands which our civilization and society make upon the woman of to-day, and her

mother did not hesitate to affirm in the most unblushing manner, as if she really believed that she were telling the truth and expected others to believe it also, that her daughter's case was not the only one of the same sort.

"Why don't you complain to the principal?"

"Well, I did write a note to him awhile ago to see what could be done, and he said the only thing for her to do, if she could not keep up with the class, was to go into a lower one. Of course she wouldn't do that."

"Why don't you take her out of school?"

"Oh, I can't do that, for she's going to try for a teacher's position after she graduates. She must do something, of course," and this garrulous mother really seemed to think that the perplexing responsibility thus laid upon her was not only more than she could bear, but that it was in some way an imposition and an outrage growing out of a defective school system.

"Over-work!" remarked another irate parent, "There is precious little over-work in some of our schools. There is not half enough in some of them. But it's the over-crowding, over-hurrying, and over-worrying, that keeps my children half the time as cross as little bears, though I can't see that they are learning much of anything."

Mrs. Mary J. Holmes ventures the heretical assertion in a leading St. Louis newspaper: "I believe there were more really thorough scholars

turned out from the schools years ago than are produced to-day with all the modern improvements in teaching. The fault lies in the system which crowds into four or five years what ought to occupy double that length of time, and the girl forgets to-morrow what she has learned to-day. I know perfectly well that I shall be called an old foggy if not a crank" (she may be reasonably sure of both titles) "if I insist that the forcing system is conducive neither to a good education, good health, or beauty of face or form. The girl bends over her books until the words run together and her eyes grow dim and her mind dimmer, so that she has no clear conception of what she has learned, or rather committed, for oftentimes it is nothing more than a committal to be repeated parrot-like next day and then lost entirely, as water runs through a sieve. The stomach cannot be overcrowded without rebelling, nor can the brains be overtaxed without a protest; and a tired brain is harder to manage than an overloaded stomach. Look at some of the girls who are struggling with too many and too long lessons, trying to keep up and pass from grade to grade so as to be graduated at last and declared educated. Hollow-eyed, haggard and pale, and often high-shouldered from stooping so constantly over their books, they seem to have lost all the beauty and elasticity of youth, and to be growing prematurely old.

"A young married woman, who was for years a student in a graded school, told me that her room-mate was in the habit of taking very strong tea at night in order to keep herself awake, her lessons were so long and difficult. What kind of nerves or health would a girl have who continued this practice for any length of time? No wonder that so many break down with nervous prostration, forgetting all they have learned and unable to grasp anything clearly and well. A married lady, whose children have been through the cramming process, likens it to a salad, which I think is a good name. A brain salad, composed of rhetoric and philosophy and algebra and geometry, German and Latin, and a multiplicity of other branches, which the girl must take up if she would at the last be graduated and receive her diploma. And in not one of these is she thorough. For how can she know much of a subject to which she has given only three or six months' time?"

Wherein lies the difference between those schools of years ago to which Mrs. Holmes alludes, and those of our day,—carefully graded, placed in handsome, commodious buildings; with every provision for physical comfort; with every known invention and appliance for intellectual labor? One of our best educators thus answers the question: "Neither schools, teachers, nor brains were better in the days of the district school than they are now. But those brains



were not distracted with a vast number of subjects, nor continually worried over the 'examination' and 'per cent.' which like the car of Juggernaut our children of to-day see mercilessly approaching to roll over them at the end of the term."

Montesquieu asserted, "The love of study is in us almost the eternal passion." What do our schools accomplish in creating and fostering this love? "We have only," says Ascot R. Hope, "our staid and formal methods of instruction. In the ears of our young, the songs of the nurses are accompanied—or shall we say drowned—by the creaking of our rusty barrel-organs whereon time-honored educational formulas are ground out with due solemnity."

But granting that no case of hydrophobia, delirium tremens, or progressive locomotor ataxia, has ever been traced directly to the "cramming" in the schools; granting, too, that all the pupils grow rapidly in grace of soul and body, what is to be said of their growth in knowledge at the same time?

The valedictorian of a class stands as its representative. Here are the words of one who had filled that position both in the grammar school and in the high school from which she had graduated four years later: "All this talk about 'cramming' in our schools is just as true as it can be. I wish more would be said about it. The way we've been rushed through these

last five years,—why, you have no idea! It's been dreadfully hard on some of the girls, but not one of them has really broken down—yet. The worst of it all is that there's been so little time for explanations and reviews that some of the girls feel as if they didn't know *anything!*" with indescribable emphasis on the last word.

Now should any young woman be allowed to talk in that reckless, exaggerated, and preposterously untruthful way? It is an incendiary sort of speech. The words might do much mischief if overheard by some of the unprincipled radicals, the blood-thirsty educational anarchists who are aching for an opportunity to destroy the true, the beautiful, the good, as represented by our flourishing institutions of learning. The city, after educating her, should muzzle her, lest she damage its dearest interests.

At the same time one is forced to admit that it is this sort of "education" which leaves a pupil so unfamiliar with the dictionary that its most simple signs and abbreviations are as unintelligible to him as Egyptian hieroglyphics; which renders him as helpless in a library as if he were in a Roman catacomb, and finds him plunged into confusion worse confounded before a shelf of cyclopedias and reference books.

It is this sort of education also which results in a pupil being unable to tell what per cent. is gained or lost in a mercantile transaction be-

cause the amount is more or less than the standard one hundred ; to calculate on the quantity of brick required to build a wall, oblivious of the fact that most walls have height as well as length and breadth ; to estimate on the yards of calico necessary for a bed-quilt, ignoring the item that bed-quilts in general have two sides ; to assume that in the poem of Maud Muller, the roofs, "white from their hill-slopes looking down," were covered with snow, although the heroine of the story was, at that same minute "raking the meadows sweet with hay"; that "the Olympian games were announced by the newspapers because a herald went through all the cities," and that "philosophical histories run back to the time years and years before there was anybody or anything happened."

"Knowledge is of two kinds," said Dr. Johnson. "We know a subject ourselves or we know where we can find some information upon it"; and another wise man, "To know where to look for what we don't know, is the next best thing to having the facts in memory. It would be as reasonable for a man to try to own everything that he could by any possibility want, so as not to patronize the grocer and butcher, as to try to know everything so as not to be obliged to consult books and libraries." Anna C. Brackett of New York, who is well known as one of our most wide-awake and independent, as well as successful teachers, says in effect: "Books are

made to keep facts in. Why should I try to keep them all in my head? I have other uses for my brains. If I want a fact, I know where to go for it, and I intend that my pupils shall."

"When you know a thing, to know that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it, this," says Confucius, "is knowledge," yet not one pupil in one hundred will ever make to a question the wise answer, "I do not know," or leave a blank line upon an examination paper.

"Here we see most distinctly," says Herbert Spencer, "the vice of our educational system. It neglects the plant for the flowers" (and such flowers!) "and in anxiety for elegance it forgets substance. So overwhelming is the influence of established routine; so terribly in our education does the ornamental override the useful!" How far some of our results are to be considered ornamental, or beautiful, is a matter upon which all might not agree, but we probably shall not disagree on one point,—that very little of our "ornamental" education will ever verify the words of Schiller,

"What as Beauty here is won  
We shall as Truth in some hereafter know."

Many of our colleges are doing, to-day, work supposed to be done in our high schools, and even in our grammar schools. It is not always a safe or an easy operation to tear out and re-

construct the foundations of a dwelling after the family has moved in and settled down. One of the professors at Cornell University thus protests : "The examinations held in our colleges indicate defects in our public school system ; these defects are found in familiar subjects, and not merely in the more difficult. The high schools must meet the just demands of the colleges or their work will devolve upon private and endowed schools. The evils of our present system are due to a dissipation of attention through a multiplicity of studies."

As for the teachers, ground between the upper and the nether mill-stones of Cram and Conscience, many a one among them can cry :

"My nature is subdued  
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand ;  
Pity me then, and wish I were renewed."

Some of them can testify to the truth of the statement made by Milton's fallen angel, that "our torments may in time become our elements."

Our public school system has gradually developed into an enormous and elaborate machine which works with the precision of a fine engine, and, as relentlessly as the engine, grinds to powder anything which interferes with its pistons and wheels. Swift and perpetual motion of the machine is the object aimed at. The people stand around it, look at it, wonder at it, speculate about it, many admiring it, some even daring to find fault with it, but no attempt is made



to slacken its speed or change its mode of motion. No blood is visible, and if any bones are broken the sound is lost in the ceaseless whirring of the wheels. There is never a call for an ambulance, and no hospital has ever been erected near it. And the splendid specimens that the engine turns out ! Look at the finished articles when they are arranged in orderly rows and placed on annual—or semi-annual—exhibition. There are only a few broken pieces—so far—in this array of complete and polished figures.

Meanwhile we occasionally read strange statements in our educational papers.

"In the new plan of studies recently adopted in Prussia for the superior school of girls there is a marked decrease in the number of studies and of hours of home study, while more hours are assigned to manual work and physical exercises."

"The Swiss Minister of Instruction has undertaken a revision of the law regulating higher education, on the ground that the present code is not based on sound psychological principles, and that it ignores, almost entirely, the natural development of the mind. Among other changes proposed is a reduction of the time given to the classics."

"The subject of over-pressure, after a temporary lull, is reviving in Germany. An appeal to the public has been signed by seventy leading men in German-speaking countries. They pro-

pose to address enquiries upon the subject to the most eminent thinkers of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, and to publish the opinions and information elicited thereby. They declare that the pale cheeks, the increase of nervous debility, the precocity of children, are so many silent witnesses against the modern system of education, and there is a deep conviction among the wisest thinkers of our time that neither the scholastic nor the domestic training of our youth is tending to the development of a race sound in mind and body."

"We do not," says the *Andover Review*, "overlook the many excellencies of our school system. We recognize not only its educational, but also its social and political advantages. We have no sympathy with those who see nothing to praise and everything to condemn. But neither do we concur in the opinion that the public school is the chief glory of America. So extensive a system must have some drawbacks. It is our decided opinion, however, that there are some evils which are more than incidental, and that it is the duty of those who make education their business to modify the system at the necessary points."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### "WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW."

DR. WM. B. HARLOW, of Syracuse, New York, thus discourses in one of the educational magazines upon the pupils' dreaded Day of Judgment: "Hair is made to stand on end, presumably for a free passage of ideas; heads are held together as if to prevent them from bursting. Some calm spirits are attacking the examination paper with the greatest deliberation; others rush madly at it determined to throttle the beast at once. Some sit helplessly back in pathetic despair. The faces of others gleam with satisfaction as they read over just the questions they had prepared upon. Others are looking furtively around as if to discover whether the coast is clear for examining certain formulæ inscribed in microscopic characters on cuffs and fingernails. Some are eating pencil-tops and others seem to be writing with their noses."

Can any teacher fail to recognize this picture of a class which has just stepped across the threshold of the Torture Chamber, regarding with varied expressions of the countenance the intellectual racks and thumb-screws cunningly devised to extract information from their reluctant brains? A composite photograph of such a group would certainly be a curiosity.

To write a composition, to pass an examination,—these are two ordeals which strike terror to the souls of all school children, yet which, like war, count their victims by thousands and tens of thousands.

"Examination is finding out what you dont know," wrote one of the lambs prepared for the sacrifice. Possibly the unwillingness of the pupil to display his ignorance may account for his dread of the finding out.

"My young friends, there *is* a pitomless bot," impressively quoted a speaker somewhat flustered at being unexpectedly called upon for a speech before a Sunday-school audience. It is into this gulf of dark despair that the mere mention of compositions and examinations—these two necessary educational processes—appears to plunge the young souls, one of whom lately wrote surreptitiously upon a blackboard a variation of the first two lines of Luther's famous hymn,

"The Day of Wrath—examination day,  
When all my knowledge vanishes away."

Prof. Jevons in an article published in *Mind* more than ten years ago declared: "There is no difficulty in seeing what period of life the examination system has now reached. It is that critical age at which its progress is so marked as to raise wide-spread irritation."

But he further states with depressing truthfulness, "Parents and the public have little idea how

close a resemblance there is between teaching and writing on the sands of the sea unless there is a distinct capacity for learning on the part of the pupil, or some system of examination and reward to force the pupil to apply. I hold that examination is one of the chief elements of an effective education. I hold that the agony of the examination room is an anticipation of the struggles of life. Examination represents the really active, grinding process in the pupil's mind; the active, as opposed to the passive, part of education."

The teacher, who, under the inspiration of Prof. Jevons's emphatic words, climbs a mental Mount Pisgah, determined to take another and more hopeful view of the Promised Land, is again prostrated in the Valley of Humiliation by the following assortment of metaphors: "Labor spent on the prescribed courses of study has left so much work untouched, that spur, and goad, and gallop must finish the rest. The examination questions, like so many sharp hooks, are drawn backward and forward through the lacerated fibre of mind in the attempt to grapple some fact memorized with sufficient coherence to permit of its being dragged forth. The examiners are made into a class of respectable rag-pickers, the respectability arising from the fact that the probes, instead of rooting about in ash-barrels, are thrust into vital processes and living sensibilities."



A school-boy once composed the following: "Wendill Philips used to explode with eloquence when he talked to people about how wicked it was to keep slaves and things and grayhounds to settum onto." Our attacker of the examination system appears to have exploded in the same fashion and in an equally righteous cause, although his equestrian, anatomical, and ash-barrel figures suggest the sentence—and have much of its effect,—“I smell a rat and see it in the air, but I'll nip it in the bud!”

Between Prof. Jevons at one extreme, and this Chicago critic at the other, stand a host of perplexed and thoughtful educators, trying to reach some solution of the problem presented in the word "Examinations." Prof. Huxley said nearly fifteen years ago: "Examination, like fire, is a good servant, but a bad master, and there seems to me some danger of its becoming our master. Students appear to become deteriorated by the constant effort to pass this or that examination, just as we hear of men's brains becoming affected by the daily necessity of catching a train. They work to pass, not to know, and outraged Science takes her revenge. They do pass and they don't."

Col. Parker says: "I believe that the greatest obstacle in the way of real teaching to-day is the standard of examinations. Those who understand children will readily appreciate the

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excitement and strain under which they labor when their fate depends upon the correct answering of ten disconnected subjects." He thinks that many of them do their worst, instead of their best, under such circumstances, because they are so highly-wrought. Does not every teacher know that there are cases of this kind? It is not a matter of opinion but a matter of fact. Many times, too, the teacher is surprised to find that the paper of one of his best scholars falls below that of an inferior pupil, the latter less disturbed, perhaps, by the examination atmosphere, or better able to work under stimulus. Mr. S. C. Stone, principal of one of the Boston schools, asks, "How are these tests regarded? All parties look forward to them with more or less anxiety, and many make strenuous efforts to prepare for them. The result is hurry, worry, rush, cram for weeks." Truly, this *is* a desirable state of things! Is it not also the truth of the majority of our schools? Ask the teachers; ask the parents; ask the pupils; don't ask "the committee man,"—he knows nothing about it.

Miss Mary E. Burt, of Chicago, thus analyzes the effect of "marking" which is an hourly operation in most schools, and which necessarily accompanies the examination system: "Children have been marked to death, there is no doubt about that. The mark, like the old country school-master's whip, has hung over

their heads until it has become the one thing of importance. The sign of an idea has come to take the place of the idea itself. It is pitiful, the way children are taught to look upon marks. The system has corrupted the minds and the conversation of children. "What is my mark?" is the important question, not "What idea is there worth getting in my lesson?" Listen to two children who have been reading Gray's *Elegy*. They say no more about the *Elegy* than they would say about a stick of wood if they had so exciting a topic for their lesson. The whole talk is about their 'mark.' "

Oh, the tremendous importance of the little word "pass"; the frightful significance of the "percent." upon which the passing is done! Rain and dew and sunshine, the winds of the heavens, the stars in their courses, create and sustain "my percentage." In it is included spring, summer, autumn, and winter, all the signs of the zodiac, and the thirty-two points of the compass. It is "the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." School is becoming to many of our young people exactly what was stated in a boy's composition:

"Goin to school is to be marked every day and examined on paper when Teacher gits Time and then marked again and then promoted and then to graduate and git flowers if your a girl and go to college if your a boy. And I almost forgot the vacations which I and the rest of the

fellows like the best of all of it." Is this, then, what education has come to mean? Let thousands of teachers testify, if evidence is wanted and they can be induced to run the risk of giving it.

It is said that there is no loss without some small gain. Well for us and for our children if that be so. In the particular case under consideration, there is some profit with all the plague. The correct calculation of the credits upon these papers requires a vast amount of frantic figuring, thereby furnishing capital mathematical exercise, especially when the number of pupils in a division, the number of divisions in a class, the number of classes in the school, the number of lessons in a day, the number of days in a week, the number of weeks in a term, the number of terms in a year and the number of the examination questions, are all added to the sum total, to be divided by another sum total, the inevitable fraction reduced to a decimal and carried out five places to expire in a plus or minus,—most likely, the latter. And if the gain is so great to each individual, think of the benefit to the favored teacher, privileged to repeat this profitable process as many times as she has pupils in her class and opportunities for examining them!

There is still another benefit accruing to the teacher, not shared by the pupils. "During the past five years," says Dr. Harlow, "I have preserved most of the examination papers which

have been written for me. Whenever there is any danger of my becoming too hilarious, I can sober myself at once by opening the closet and gazing thoughtfully upon this literary skeleton, which has already assumed such vast proportions." Herein lies a valuable suggestion for teachers. To those who have in the same way preserved these "literary remains," how exhilarating the prospect of the use to which they can be put! And teachers are usually in need of sobering. Gay and giddy creatures, who have nothing to do but to sit in a big chair on a platform a few hours, on five days out of seven, to "hear lessons," with long vacations and enormous salaries,—in some cases as high as seven dollars a week,—such creatures, like one of Mrs. Whitney's heroines, "can take a great amount of sobering." They need it; they ought to pine for it. To those who have so far made no attempt to gather such a collection,—“a word to the wise is sufficient.” It is not a difficult thing to do and there are frequent opportunities for doing it. Waste no time. Set about it at once. So shall the profession grow in sobriety, dignity, and worth, while development shall be given to brain and spirit,

“From the toil  
Of dropping buckets into empty wells  
And growing old in drawing nothing up.”

But setting aside these incidental benefits to the teacher and the taught, what is the practical



outcome of the examination system when viewed in the most comprehensive way? Stating the proposition in syllogistic form,—All examinations are good for schools; all schools now have examinations; therefore all schools are better than ever before,—can we draw a satisfactory conclusion? Failing in this, must we not in some way modify our premises? What is the testimony of competent witnesses on this subject?

The Superintendent of the Cincinnati schools gives his: "For over thirty years pupils have been promoted in these schools almost exclusively on the results of written examinations. The influence has been evil and that continually. It has fostered and almost necessitated mechanical methods of teaching. The principal of the first grammar school in one of the largest cities of the country, once said in response to the inquiry why so much time was devoted to the memorizing of dates in history and rules in mensuration, 'My success as a teacher is measured by the per cent. of correct answers my pupils give to the series of questions submitted by the examiner for promotion to the high school. I cannot stop to inquire whether my instruction is right or wrong. I must prepare my wares for the market.'"

Col. Parker declares: "The demand fixed by examiners is for cram and not for art, and as long as the demand exists so long will the teacher's mind shrivel and dwarf in the everlasting

tread-mill that has no beginning or end, and the more it turns the more it creaks."

Answer, teachers, all over this broad universe where examination days are counted in the school calendar,—are these statements true of you and of your pupils? If not, why do you not conscientiously contradict them?

But while, as a Southern preacher remarked to his delinquent congregation, "My brutherin', these things hadn't orter so to be nohow," the profession finds that "they *air*," and is at its wits' end to devise ways and means for gathering its lawful crops into the garner without letting the young reapers and binders stab themselves to death with their sickles, or smother themselves and their teachers under the stacks of grain.

The traveler, journeying on foot along the country, occasionally finds it necessary to take note from sun and shadow of his rate of progress. The sea-captain daily measures his speed and determines his locality. The tradesman balances his books as regularly as the months come round, while no merchant fails to "take account of stock" before beginning a new commercial year. Who wonders at these business transactions, or quarrels with the way in which they are conducted? The teacher's equally legitimate measure of progress is the stock-taking of the contents of his literary warehouses. Why should it prove to be such a season of

weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, for teachers and pupils alike?

An examination\* is for the purpose of finding out what a pupil knows, and a written examination has the additional object of giving him practice in the expression of his knowledge on paper. Are not both results legitimate and desirable? The child is supposed to know something, and his teacher fondly hopes that the amount of his knowledge is in direct proportion to the labor expended upon him. But blessed is he who expects nothing, for he can not be disappointed, and if he receives anything he is just so much ahead of his anticipations.

To ask questions,—what is easier? To ask too many, to ask too hard ones, to confuse, discourage, exasperate children,—what is easier? And, moreover, is there anything easier than to do all this from the best of motives and in utter ignorance of any wrong?

Froude asserts: "The demands which intelligent people imagine that they can make on the minds of students is something amazing. I will give you a curious illustration of it. When the competitive examination system was first set on foot, a board of examiners met to draw up their papers of questions. The scale of requirement had first to be settled. Among them a highly distinguished man, who was to examine in English history, announced that, for himself, he meant to set a paper for which Macaulay might

possibly get full marks, and he wished the other examiners to imitate him in the other subjects. I saw the paper which he set. I could myself have answered two questions out of a dozen. And it was gravely expected that ordinary young men of twenty-one, who were to be examined also in Greek and Latin, in moral philosophy, in ancient history, in mathematics, and in two modern languages, were to show a proficiency in each and all of these subjects which a man of mature age and extraordinary talents, like Macaulay, who had devoted his whole time to that special study, had attained only in one of them."

The same principle, less in degree but precisely the same in kind, obtains in our American grammar and high schools. Is it any wonder that the mere word "Examination" cleaves like a two-edged sword the hearts of discouraged children and despairing teachers? Can the force of folly farther go, than in these preposterous requirements?

The same author continues, "Under this system, teaching becomes cramming; an enormous accumulation of propositions of all sorts and kinds is thrust down the students' throats, to be poured out again into examiners' laps." This process is defended by Prof. Jevons. He assumes that the struggle to swallow, to retain for a certain time, and to successfully cast out again this mass of information, is a test of the power of the student, proof of his ability to

manage other equally difficult matters in the course of his business life. But is not a high mark in such examinations more an indication of the ability to recollect words than of the intellectual power resulting from thorough training? It is the philosopher Locke who tells us that "the gift of memory is owing to a happy constitution, not to any habitual improvement got by exercise." That so many students do successfully pass these tests is owing more to their fortunate possession of this particular constitution than to anything else, and is no argument for the waste of time and labor involved in putting pupils through these complicated mental maneuvers.

But what of those pupils, sometimes the brightest ones in the class, whose wits seem driven into limbo by the mere sight of the examination paper? Like King Duncan's two chamberlains whose possets were drugged by Lady Macbeth, "Memory, the warder of the brain, becomes a fume, and the receipt of reason a limbeck only." In too many cases, "their drenched natures lie as in a death."

Little Tom, the chimney-sweeper, the hero of Charles Kingsley's fascinating romance, "Water Babies," found himself in the course of his wanderings in the Island of Tomtoddies,—“all heads and no bodies.” Tom, as he approached it, heard grumbling and grunting and growling and wailing and weeping and whining, then



began to hear words—the Tomtoddies' song which they sing morning and evening and all night long, to their great idol Examination,—“I can't learn my lesson, the Examiner's coming!” and that was the only song which they knew. Anxious to get some help from Tom, they asked him questions: “What is the latitude and longitude of Snooksville in Norman's County, Oregon, United States?” “What was the name of Mutius Scævola's thirteenth cousin's grandmother's maid's cat?” and another in desperation inquired, “Can you tell me the name of a place that nobody ever heard of, where nothing ever happened, in a country which has not been discovered yet?”

“And what good on earth will it do if I tell you?” quoth Tom.

Well, they didn't know. All they knew was, the Examiner was coming!

As regards practice in rhetorical expression, how much attention is paid to form or arrangement in the pupil's breathless plunges after facts lurking somewhere in the depths of his memory, to be drawn up with as little mutilation as possible, and flung upon the paper as a gasping, wriggling fish is flung upon the bank of a stream? If Lord Bacon knows what he is talking about when he says, “The art of well delivering the knowledge we possess is among the secrets left to be discovered by future generations,” teachers, at least, are forced to admit that this present

generation is not one of the specified "future" ones, judging from such forms of expression as,

"Uses of the fat in the body is to covered the bones depend upon age race weather climate and to covered the muscular and they are about one twentieth of the body is fat."

"When the price of several articles we find by the same of articles we dividing by the artibles we have the factors of a number are the division."

"Sir Philip Sidneys works were not much but he was so perfectly in his manners we feel inclined to overlook his writings."

"Examination questions," says Dr. Harlow, "are like the examiner. Some questions, if fully answered, would require whole volumes. A pupil who is poorly prepared is pleased when he sees them. He can conceal his ignorance by wandering at his own sweet will over a wide field of superficial requirements."

"Thomas A Beckitt lived sort of princeley but when he was archbishop of canturberry he threw away all his splendid Clothes didnt go to any more Balls and theatres and dressed just like a nun. He had more Religion than he used to have but he was not as good as he used to be but all through the Reign before all the clergymen had groan very powerful they murdered thousands of People and if they were ministers the Folks thought everything they did was all right Henry said the judges should try them just

as if they were other people Beckitt didnt like this and had lots of Fights with the King and one day the King set up four nights to kill him and he conspired before the altar exclaimeing is there no one to rid me of this impertinunt Priest and when the King heard it he said he was consternation and he was martered and his tomb was observed once in 50 years People went there on foot on picnicks and they used to have jubilees."

"Pockahontus was a young indian girl she pronounced the sentenc of deth upon her and she was the favorit daughter of a chief who was about only 12 she merried with the conscence of her farther mr rolf and she was made useful to keep the piece in the indains and colonoists and when she was twenty to she died and returned to America and left one son in the most respectable families in virginia."

"Bones is the framework of the body. If I had no bones in me I should not have so much shape as I have now. If I had no bones, my brain, heart, lungs, and larger blood vessels would be lying round in me, and might get hurt. If my bones were burned I should be brittle, because it would take the animal out of me. If I was soaked in acid I should be limber. I'd rather be soaked than burned. Some of my bones don't grow close to my others snug like the branches to the trunk of a tree. The reason why they don't grow that way is because they have joints. Joints is good things to have in bones. All my

bones put together in their right place make a skeleton. If I leave out any or put any in the wrong place it aint no skeleton. Some animals have their skeletons on the outside. I am glad I aint them animals, for my skeleton, like it is on the chart, would not look very well on my outside."

Why is it not as logical to examine in order to find whether a pupil should be allowed to continue in a class, as to decide his fitness for promotion? Could not an immense amount of time be saved in that way, to say nothing of avoiding discouragement on the part of both pupil and teacher? In Omaha this plan has been found to work successfully. In some schools pupils conceded to be superior in every respect are excused from the unnecessary formality of an examination,—an immense saving of labor. Can any harm result from this method? In some schools examinations have been entirely given up and the teacher's judgment is accepted as decisive regarding the standing of each pupil. This plan does not in all cases prove satisfactory. Of course, teachers should be infallible, possessing divine wisdom without a touch of human weakness. Perhaps such do exist in some of Bacon's "future generations," but at present we must be satisfied with mere human beings in all professions. A teacher may be partial to a few pupils, as a mother is often found to be, concerning one member of the family, though both

mother and teacher are quick to resent any such implication, and generally seem unconscious of it. The deportment of a troublesome child may easily bias the judgment of a teacher; his personal taste in the matter of studies may lead him to place a higher estimate upon the work done in some branches than in others. Much injustice may be done children by the best-intentioned teachers, and against injustice of any sort each child has a right to be protected as far as possible.

But, as in the majority of cases the decision can be safely left with the instructor, it should be a comparatively easy matter to supplement his opinion or to test it in doubtful cases. Is it fair or logical that his daily and hourly experience with a class for months should be utterly ignored, and all decision made dependent upon the results of a few hours spent by the distressed and terrified pupils in the use of pen, ink, and paper?

The Superintendent of Schools, Allegheny, Pa., says: "The teacher who is clamorous for pupils to be promoted without examination, gives ample evidence, in my judgment, of poorly prepared classes." (What a compliment to teachers!) "No business ever prospers where the cashiers are allowed to audit their own accounts." As if cashiers ever did "audit their own accounts"! This is a poor metaphor for an illustration of the case, but as the case itself is a poor one the figure is in keeping. Still it is suggestive of one



of the weakest points in our educational system—that of looking upon pupils as so many blank books, each one to be written through and filled up by educational scribes, with as much skill and despatch as possible, so many words to a page, so many pages to a chapter, and as many chapters as the course of study calls for.

The late Henry F. Harrington of New Bedford, Mass., a man of eminent ability and unquestioned devotion to our schools, exclaims: "What a perfect farce a test examination becomes, subject, as its transaction and results necessarily are to contingencies which negative its justice in the face of the positive knowledge which the teacher possesses of the standing of every member of his school! How perfectly the daily intercourse of the schoolroom enables the teacher to know thoroughly the inward character as well as the outward form of every one. If when an examination has been finished and its per cents. recorded, the teacher says, 'Such a pupil has succeeded who was not worthy to succeed,' or, 'Such a pupil has failed who ranks in merit above many who have won,' how his judgment, in the form of conscience, overthrows the decision of figures and renders an insistence upon it an injustice and a shame!"

To say nothing of the ways and means by which examination results are obtained, what is

the practical value of them? Theoretically they are to determine the pupil's fitness for promotion. Assuming that the mental measure is in every case correct, does it follow that the pupil is moved along accordingly? O theory and practice, how difficult you find it to keep step! The boy has a body as well as a brain, a fact usually overlooked until time for promotion. The body necessarily occupies just so many inches of space, so the body as well as the brain must be measured. Nor is this all. There are just so many rooms in the school building, just so many seats in each room; forty seats can hardly be made to accommodate fifty pupils; there are ten vacant seats in the room below. What a simplification of the whole matter to draw lots and keep back the extra ten pupils! But with fifty seats in the higher room and only forty pupils to fill them, ten more, regardless of percentage, must be promoted from the lower room, provided there is that amount of surplus furniture. No elaborate calculation is necessary for this sort of transaction; a little mental arithmetic is sufficient. "How easy is it then!"

Truly, "Promotion cometh not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south," as sayeth the Psalmist.

And what is the value of the "exhibitions" and the "graduations"? In the words of one of these graduates, "We can write and read our own compositions—*essays*. We have

a teacher to help us compose them, and another teacher to train us to deliver them. Those of us who have extra talent are to try for the valedictory. We are excused from our regular studies to read up for it. We've got piles of books, and the composition teacher has given us lots of references, and we're going to make heaps of notes of everything we can find on 'The Intrinsic Value of a Symmetrical Education,' and Eliza Jane Metonymy is writing just a lovely poem about Middle Aged Myths, and the rhyme is just perfect only in six or eight places, but Miss Literati will fix that up for her, and our class motto is *Non Compus Mentis* which means 'If you know a good deal a good deal is expected of you' or something like that, I'm not quite sure what it means and none of us have ever studied Latin, but it looks just too perfectly lovely for anything worked out in white carnations on a pink background."

White dresses? Certainly, that the effect may be pleasing to the eye, though the costume requires a carriage. Gloves? Of course, in order to be "consistent" and thereby add "a jewel" to other adornments. Flowers? By all means. All girls receive flowers at graduation—big baskets and harps, and horseshoes, and the most popular girl is known by the size and number of the offerings. If, as occasionally happens, some "hand-to-mouth" family, those "poor, but respectable" persons so common

in the community, cannot,—after paying the rent, buying shoes for little Johnnie, and putting sufficient food on the table,—have enough left over to pay for Mary Ann's dress and gloves and flowers and carriage—why, Mary Ann either stays at home to put little Johnnie to bed, or, in her best Sunday gown, slips in among the audience, gazing with a sort of "so near and yet so far" feeling at her more fortunate, though perhaps even less brilliant, classmates.

Why the public should be led to look forward to any such periodical and gratuitous entertainment, why pupils should claim it as an inalienable right, why parents should be levied upon for the funds required for this display, nobody really seems to know. The public enjoys it, the pupils want it, the parents expect it. To be sure, it costs considerable in many ways, but then, unlike Christmas, graduation comes but once in a life-time. Do not mind any extra labor on the part of the teachers,—they would not dare to grumble even if they had the disposition; do not consider the extra drain upon the strength of special pupils,—they are happy martyrs; do not count the cost to the parents of any financial sacrifice which they must make in order that Sarah Jane may appear as well as the rest of her class. The public—that great, vague, irresponsible, unthinking, but exacting public—finds it pleasant to sit and look and listen to the bloom-

ing young girls, who, in pretty clothes, among banks of flowers, read, recite, and sing for them. The young girls enjoy the excitement: the brilliance, the beauty of the occasion; the rapt attention and pleased applause of the audience. And as our genial Holmes says of similar conditions, "I cannot, for the life of me find anything Satanic in all this. Tell me, only between ourselves, if some of these things are not desirable enough in their way?" But how about the educational way?

And what is exhibited by the "exhibition"? Do the five or ten chosen ones who have received an immense amount of extra intellectual and elocutionary drill, fairly represent the average mental and oratorical ability of the class?

Is it desirable that education shall develop the judgment, enabling it to distinguish between truth and falsehood, value and worthlessness, crudity and culture? Shall it give a sense of consistency as shown in the relation of income to outgo, the worth and use of time, amount and result of effort? Shall it foster economy not only of money, but of time, force, and feeling, often more valuable than dollars and cents? Shall it, in short, inculcate an understanding of the general fitness of things? It is the *dictum* of Matthew Arnold that "the chief elements of education are sobriety and proportion." What amount of these two elements is cultivated in the ordinary school display?



In the public school, established on democratic principles, each pupil is equally entitled to instruction, but on improved common-sense principles, let extra hours of labor be spent upon those who need it least. The best natural writers shall be stimulated to literary effort, the best natural speakers be drilled in elocutionary practice. Thus can be made a sensible and practical application of the doctrine of the conservation of energy, and thereby shall the Scriptures be fulfilled,—To him that hath talent shall be given extra assistance in its development, while from him that hath not shall be taken away what little opportunity he is entitled to have.

Are not the remedies for the evils of cramming, examinations, promotions, and exhibitions, the same as may reasonably be suggested for all the shortcomings of our schools,—less push and more progress ; less percentage and more profit ; less show and more substance ?

THE END.







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